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   Regional Oral History Office  
Earl Warren Oral History Project

LABOR LOOKS AT EARL WARREN

Germain Bulcke:        A Longshoreman's Observations  
Joseph W. Chaudet:    A Printer's View  
Paul Heide:            A Warehouseman's Reminiscences  
U. S. Simonds:        A Carpenter's Comments  
Ernest H. Vernon:     A Machinist's Recollection

Interviews Conducted by  
Frank Jones



## PREFACE

The Earl Warren Oral History Project, a project of the Regional Oral History Office, was inaugurated to produce tape-recorded interviews with persons instrumental in the political and judicial scene during the Warren Era in California. Focusing on the years 1925 to 1953, the interviews are designed not only to document the life of Chief Justice Warren but to gain new information on the social and political changes of a state in the throes of a depression, then a war, then a postwar boom.

Because of the age of many of the memoirists, efforts in the first phase of the project have been centered on capturing as many accounts on tape as possible. The interviews that were transcribed in this phase, including those in the present volume, have been checked, emended by the memoirist, final typed, indexed, and bound with pictures and other supporting information.

The interviews have stimulated the deposit of Warreniana source material in the form of papers from friends and aides, old movie newsreels, video tapes, and photographs. This rapidly expanding Earl Warren Collection, added to the Bancroft Library's already extensive holdings on 20th Century California politics and history, provides a rich center for research.

The first phase of the Project has been financed by an outright grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, by gifts from local donors interested in preserving data on Warren and his California era, and by additional funds offered by National Endowment for the Humanities on a matching basis. Contributors to the Project include the former law clerks of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Cortez Society, and many longtime supporters of "The Chief." The Friends of the Bancroft Library were instrumental in the fund raising and supplemented all local contributions from their own treasury.

Amelia R. Fry, Director  
Earl Warren Oral History Project

1 July 1970  
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# Earl Warren Oral History Project

Interviews Completed by September 1970

## EARL WARREN'S BAKERSFIELD

Maryann Ashe and Ruth Smith Henley, Earl Warren's Bakersfield  
 Omar Cavins, Coming of Age in Bakersfield  
 Frank Vaughan, School Days in Bakersfield  
 Ralph Kreiser, A Reporter Recollects the Warren Case

## LABOR LOOKS AT EARL WARREN

Germaine Bulcke, A Longshoreman's Observations  
 Joseph Chaudet, A Printer's View  
 Paul Heide, A Warehouseman's Reminiscences  
 U. S. Simonds, A Carpenter Comments  
 Ernest H. Vernon, A Machinist's Recollections

Russel V. Lee, Pioneering in Pre-Paid Group Medicine

John F. Mullins, How Earl Warren Became District Attorney

Robert B. Powers, Law Enforcement, Race Relations, 1930-60





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Earl Warren Oral History Project

Germain Bulcke

A LONGSHOREMAN'S OBSERVATIONS

An Interview Conducted by  
Frank N. Jones





Germain Bulcke



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Germain Bulcke: A LONGSHOREMAN'S OBSERVATIONS

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Germain Bulcke (born 1902) was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to document his role in the development of organized labor on the West Coast, and the relationships between union leaders and Earl Warren and other elected officials.

Interviewer: Frank N. Jones, who has extensive knowledge of labor history from his years with the state AFL-CIO plus general acquaintance with public affairs from his wide journalistic experience. Research material developed by the Regional Oral History Office with guidance on general questions from principal investigators of the Earl Warren Project.

### Conduct of the

Interview: A single interview was held on June 12, 1969, at Mr. Bulcke's home, 25 Locke Lane in Mill Valley, California, a charming rustic community in the redwood-covered coastal hills, for several generations a retreat from nearby metropolitan Oakland and San Francisco. Much of the village provides a view of the sweeping bay shore waterfront was the scene of the labor strife which Mr. Bulcke discusses.

Editing: Editing of the transcribed taped interview was done by June Hogan of the Regional Oral History Office. Minor rearrangements of material were made to maintain continuity of the discussion without interrupting its informal quality. Mr. Bulcke reviewed the edited text and made a few additional comments to amplify or clarify his original statements.

### Narrative Account of Mr. Bulcke and Progress of the

Interview: Forceful, Belgian-born Germain Bulcke, an International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union co-worker with Harry Bridges, is one of the most respected of the pioneer leaders who founded the ILWU prior to the 1934 Pacific Coast waterfront strike. His fellow unionists speak of his clarity of thought and decisiveness of action over four decades as major factors in the ILWU's national leadership in coping with the knotty problems of automation. He was ILWU vice-president



1947-60; a member of the 1934 and 1937 strike committees; a former president of San Francisco Local 10; and frequently a board member of the International. He served as southern California area arbitrator on the request of both management and union from 1960 until his retirement in 1966.

He was the first member of organized labor to serve on the State Fish and Game Commission, appointed by both Governors Olson and Warren, meeting Warren once personally during this time.

Bulcke graphically recalls the anathemas of the non-organized maritime worker: star gangs, kickbacks, brass checks, often fatal working conditions, aspects of favoritism, pointing up the need for an efficiently organized union to ameliorate dockside conditions during the 20's. Similar comments are made by Paul Heide, another interviewee in this series. Especially valuable is his eye-witness account of the death of two workers during the 1934 "Bloody Thursday" strike, and the little-known "Modesto Case" of 1935 in which he claims employers had planted dynamite in a car whose occupants were then arrested by company police.

He feels he was well aware of Earl Warren's positions on many matters: "My personal conclusion is that Warren was anti-labor as a district attorney and attorney general . . . as governor he was a smooth operator . . . a brilliant man . . . labor found it very difficult to get pro-labor [bills] passed . . . you never found him on the side of legislation which would benefit the working man." Bulcke was "pleasantly surprised by the terrific job" Warren did on the Supreme Court.

Gabrielle Morris  
Regional Oral History Office



### FORTY YEARS IN LABOR

Jones: Did you have a hand in the placement of the Benny Bufano Saint Francis statue at the Copperdome Local 10 headquarters of International Longshoremen?

Bulcke: I did. I was International vice president at the time of the placement and took part in, you might say, the unveiling of it.

Jones: Quite a landmark in San Francisco. It is good of you to give us your time for this project. Did you have any thoughts on the possible value of this?

Bulcke: Well, it's been my feeling that a great deal of the history and the development of the trade union movement in the Bay Area and in California has not been properly recorded, you might say, and that there are great, great amounts of activity that very likely would not be available to anyone unless you had participated yourself. So I feel that in this manner we can bring to the attention of scholars and other people interested, bring to them the facts as we know them and the development, as I say, of the trade union movement in this state and in the city.

Jones: Right. It's better to get it from the men who were active in this than from the books, eh?

Now can we slide back to your early years?  
Tell us where you were born and what year and all about your father and mother and how you first came to the Bay Area and that sort of thing.

### BORN IN BELGIUM

Bulcke: I was born in Belgium in 1902. And I came over to this country in 1920 when I was 18 years old. I first went to Detroit, Michigan where I was employed in various automobile factories and other activities.

But I always had a desire to come to San Francisco, and I came to San Francisco in 1925, in April of '25, to be correct, and I got employment as a longshoreman at that time for the Admiral Line. I have been on the waterfront as a working longshoreman or an officer of that union ever since that time.

Jones: Ever since 1925. Where did you go to school? What age were you when you came over?





Bulcke: I was 18 years old when I came over. My schooling I received in Belgium. I went through high school and had one year and a half of business college. That's the amount of schooling that I have received.

Jones: What was your father's name?

Bulcke: My father's name was Frank and he was a merchant tailor by occupation.

Jones: And your mother?

Bulcke: My mother was just a housewife. I lost my mother during the early part of World War I when she was injured by either a bomb or an unexploded anti-aircraft shell that hit the house. She was seriously injured and passed away six weeks later.

Jones: What city was that?

Bulcke: That was near Brugge (Flemish) or Bruges (French) in Belgium.

Jones: What was your mother's maiden name?

Bulcke: Amelia Demeyer was my mother's name.

Jones: And how old was she when she died?

Bulcke: She was forty-seven years old.

Jones: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Bulcke: I had two sisters. One that was two years younger than I who passed away four years ago over in Belgium and I have another sister who is older than I who is a resident in San Francisco, has been for many years.

Jones: What's her name?

Bulcke: Her name is Gusty Ann and her married name is Lefief.

Jones: Thank you. Let's see, then. You came to San Francisco in, did you say 1925?

Bulcke: 1925.

Jones: Then you got into, was it warehouseman or dock work?



### START AS LONGSHOREMAN

Bulcke: No, I was employed as a longshoreman which means that you work both ship and dock, depending on where the work is.

Jones: Then you began working as a longshoreman in 1925. Could you tell us a little bit about what were the working conditions at that time? They didn't have any fringe benefits or overtime or contracts, I presume.

Bulcke: The working conditions at that time were very bad. By that I mean there were no regular schedules and often times -- most of the time -- when you started the ship you stayed with it until it was completely discharged and loaded or the reverse. Twenty-four hour shift was very common. Thirty-six hours was not out of the ordinary. I myself put in a fifty-two hour stretch one time without going home.

Jones: Do you mean that you had to work that long?

Bulcke: Yes. You had to work that way. Every four or five hours you'd get one hour off to go and eat. If you did not stay with the job you were never hired again. In other words, in order to maintain your employment, you had to work the hours that the company insisted on in order to get the ship out as fast as possible.

Jones: In 1925, those were pretty prosperous times, the mid '20's, at least they were supposed to be. Were there so many men available for dock work?

### THE SHAPE-UP

Bulcke: There was a great number of men available. At that time we had what was commonly known as "the shape-up," which we understand still exists on some of the ports on the East Coast. Unless you were regularly employed by a company and as such you would work their ships (but many times they would not have any ships in for a week at a time or more), we would shape-up at the foot of Market Street by the Ferry Building and the various gang foremen would hire you for work for that day or whatever the shift may be. As such you would work for various companies throughout the year.

Jones: Yes. That's the shape-up that still exists in the



Jones: East, isn't it? Well what was your average wage in those days and what would a comparable job pay today just for contrast, so we can see that the ILWU hasn't been in vain all these years?

Bulcke: Well, I would say that for a longshoreman who was more or less regularly employed -- by that I mean that he was part of a gang that worked regularly for one steamship company and would work extra wherever possible -- his average wages at that time, over a year's period, ran something like \$160 a month. Now, under the present situation, they make that much in one week.

Jones: Another longshoreman I talked to, Paul Heide, made \$3.50 a day in a warehouse in the early '30's. It was a half a cent less than a comparable job that a beginning warehouseman makes in an hour now.

Bulcke: Right. Well, at that time the basic rate was 90¢ an hour. You got \$1.10 for all work after six o'clock and up to eight o'clock the next morning. In other words the differential between straight time and overtime was 20¢.

#### BLUE BOOK UNION

Bulcke: First of all there was in existence at that time a union which was commonly known as the Blue Book Union. That name came about because the membership book in that union was blue. And this was a company union. It had been created by the employers after the regular or previous trade union that had existed on the waterfront had been destroyed in the 1921 strike. This was a company union. You had to belong in order to get work, although most of the longshoremen would avoid paying dues if they could.

The business agent of that union would come around every so often on the ships, get the list of the men working there from the employer and then force the men to pay up their back dues or else get discharged. This resulted in many of the men, including myself, often using fictitious names so that the business agent of that company union would not know that you were the person that he was looking for and in that way, often times got by for quite a while without paying any dues. When you did get caught up with, generally the men would maintain that they had been



Bulcke: away and had not worked on the waterfront for many months and had just gotten back and maybe worked a week or two.

In that way they oftentimes could be allowed to continue their work by the payment of certain amounts of money, the amount depending on how the business agent considered your explanations. In that way, as I say, many times you would pay six or seven or ten dollars so-called back dues and you'd continue to work until the next time they caught up with you.

Jones: Your identification was a little harder to ascertain, especially with your pen names, if you didn't have a social security card number --

Bulcke: We had none of that. In those days, the various companies had one day a week that they paid and they were not all on the same day nor on the same hour. Sometimes when you had a paycheck coming there you might have been working over in the East Bay or somewhere else. You couldn't get there. Sometimes it would take two to three weeks before you could collect your money. I know, it happened to me and others: you had forgotten what name to use and sometimes you had difficulty collecting your money, although the companies issued a brass check with a number on it, which would appear on the foreman's list of men that he had employed. This brass check, of course, was supposed to be the proof that you had worked there. You turned in the brass check in order to get your money.

At that time there was quite a system because of that type of payment -- meaning by that, that weeks went by that sometimes you couldn't get your money. There were people that made it a business of so-called cashing these brass checks, generally for five percent discount. And there was one person well known on the waterfront for many years, known as "Nickel Al" because that was what he did. He cashed in the checks of the men and would charge them five percent and then when pay day came he would go to the various companies and collect.

Jones: Quite a system.

Bulcke: It was quite a racket.





UNION ORGANIZING

- Jones: Here we are somewhere around 1930 or '32. Could you tell us a little bit about what led up to the strike?
- Bulcke: First of all, in 1928 a group of us, including Bridges and others, had gotten together quite often during lunch hours or after work and felt that it was necessary that a union be established and to do away with the so-called Blue Book or company union.
- Jones: Where did one of these meetings take place? Where was Mr. Bridges at that time?
- Bulcke: He was working as a longshoreman. Occasionally, when there would be more than one ship in these docks, sometimes three, there would naturally be a larger group of longshoremen there and during lunch hour we would discuss these things. The attempt was to try to get enough men to see whether or not we could get a union started.
- Jones: Do you remember the names of any of these other early --
- Bulcke: Well, yes, some of them I could remember. Henry Schmidt, who is now retired, was one of them. Bridges was another. A fellow that later on became for a while president of the district, when we were eventually chartered by the ILA, whose nick name was "Burglar Louis." I don't know where he is today. He may have passed on. Many of the men that were active in that group, with the exception of those that I recall off hand, I'm quite sure have passed away.
- Jones: We're talking about San Francisco. Some of these things would be applicable to Oakland docks, too.
- Bulcke: Oh, yes. We considered Oakland as part of the San Francisco Bay. In other words we worked in Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond, Port Chicago, Crockett, Redwood City...
- Jones: Oh, it's pretty much like the way it is today.
- Bulcke: The way it is today, yes. We worked all of those places. So, far as we were concerned, this was all one area to us, one area where we were loading and unloading ships.



### GRIEVANCES

Jones: What specifically were you aiming for? What were you trying to get away from, the shape-up?

Bulcke: We were trying to get away from the shape-up and the favoritism.

Jones: Could you give me an example?

Bulcke: Well, favoritism is something like this: the steamship companies or stevedoring companies had regularly employed longshoremen who were known as "star gangs." In other words, they always worked when that particular company had a ship in. And these so-called star gangs would get the easier work. When the work got harder, quite often they would be moved to another hatch and then non-regularly employed gangs would be brought in to help out. So that the star gangs would get much more regular employment than those who were not in the star gangs. Naturally this type of favoritism resulted in some of the gangs making a great deal more money and with considerably less hard work than the others. It didn't make any difference who you were. It depended on what gang you were in.

Now there was also another point that bothered us a great deal. It was quite prevalent for members of the gang to pay back to the foreman a certain amount of money -- we used to call it "kick-back" -- in order to keep working. That not only took the form of payment of money, but, when the gang wasn't working, this particular foreman would request that some of the men who were amenable to this come out to his house and paint it and do that type of thing. In other words it was a question of a kick-back racket that took various forms. That was one of the reasons why we tried to get a union started. But, as I say, we were not successful and those that were known to have attempted it were black-listed.

Jones: What year would this be?

Bulcke: This was 1928 and early 1929. As I say, the union did not get started at that time. However, of course, then in 1933, after the passage of the National Recovery Act and the 7A gave the right for workers to organize, we then started again and were successful in getting the majority of them in, not only in San Francisco, but up and down the Coast, to sign up



Bulcke: with the union. We had received the charter from the ILA, International Longshoremen's Association. It still exists on the Gulf and East Coasts.

### SIGNING UP

Jones: That must have been difficult with a number of men unemployed in 1932, '33, wasn't it?

Bulcke: Well, it wasn't too difficult, because by that time the regularly employed longshoremen -- by that I mean the men that regularly worked on the waterfront and tried to stay there and make a living -- knew one-another pretty well, so that in the signing-up process you naturally went to the gangs that you knew were regularly employed first to get them to sign up.

One method that was used which probably is not remembered by many people was that when we started, after we had received the charter and were officially a union as far as the international was concerned, which I say was the ILA...

Jones: This would be 1933?

Bulcke: 1933. We started to issue membership books into what was then known as 38-79, which was the number of the San Francisco Longshore Local -- 38 was the number of the district, 79 was the number of the local. There were three people that were authorized to issue books, membership books. We never issued a book lower than the number 1000. For instance, I'm a charter member -- my book number was 3869. Bridges' book was even larger in number. Of course the give-away is the date that you were initiated.

Showing this book around to the men on the waterfront who had not yet joined -- without drawing any particular attention to the number -- many of them would say, "My goodness, is there that many members in the union already?" And our answer would be, "It must be because that's the next number up." So it was a bit of a sleight-of-hand trick to get the men to come into the union, and when they saw this it went like a snowball and first thing you know, why practically ninety-eight percent of all the men working on the waterfront in San Francisco signed up into the union.

Then, of course, after the union was well-established,



Bulcke: we also worked together with the establishment of the locals up and down the Coast. For instance, I went to Portland and helped organize there. I went to Seattle and helped sign up men there.

Jones: What was your title in the union at that time?

Bulcke: At that time I was just simply a member of the executive board of the local, and on the, you might say, sort of informal organizing committee. There was no salary attached to it. It was a question of doing what you could with what you had. The union had no money, or hardly any money.

Jones: Well, you got your train fare, didn't you?

Bulcke: Well, when I went to Portland, the gang I was working in had been with them for over seven years. Each of the men or most of the men made a contribution. I got eleven dollars and thirty-five cents and I went to Portland with that. Of course, I rode "the side-car Pullman." That didn't cost anything.

But I wasn't the only person who did this. It's just an example of some of the activity that took place in order to get the union started.

Then we had a convention. I can't remember the exact date, but I know that it was early in the year 1934 and at that convention...

Jones: How many delegates showed up?

Bulcke: Well, as I remember, of course there is a record of that, but I would say that my memory serves me. I would say that there were probably two hundred and fifty, maybe two hundred and seventy-five accredited delegates from up and down the Coast.

Jones: How many at your last one like down in Los Angeles?

Bulcke: Last one was I think there were three hundred and fifty or something like that.

Jones: We know that the total membership of the ILWU is about 75,000 with everyone.

Bulcke: Yes, that's including all of the various divisions, yes. But you see, attendance at the convention is based on the number of members in each local and not every local sends all the delegates they are





Bulcke: entitled to because of the cost involved, although their voting strength is maintained whether there is one delegate or fifty.

### UNION GOALS

Jones: Then we're leading up to the strike. Your opposition was...

Bulcke: At that time it was the Waterfront Employers' Association and, as I say, the convention adopted the program which requested that, first of all, a hiring hall that would be controlled by the union, where men would be dispatched to work in a rotative manner based on earnings, which is the system used today. The "low man out" system, as it is known.

It asked for the six-hour day and naturally asked for more. The wages had been cut from ninety cents an hour to seventy-five cents an hour. We asked for a dollar an hour and time-and-a-half for overtime. Of course, after some time in the negotiations, why the employers at that time would not agree to any of these requests. Also, of course, one of the basic demands was a Coast-wide agreement, the same as is in effect now. In other words, one agreement for all the ports. The employers wouldn't consider that. They claimed that they had no such authority, that, if any agreements were reached, it would be on a port basis and it would be done by the local employers and so forth.

Jones: That's like state's rights...

Bulcke: [Laughs] Well, to some degree it was. I can't recall exactly -- it's a matter of record in the library of the union -- the amount of time that was spent in negotiations with the employers. Eventually we decided that there was no other way out. We had to strike. The strike date was set and it was postponed for various reasons, mainly that there was some attempt made by interested people to see whether or not negotiations could result in an acceptable agreement.

Jones: Was this a neutral group?

Bulcke: Well, there were some business people and some city officials who were interested in trying to avoid, of course, the strike, if at all possible.



### STRIKE IN EVERY PORT

Bulcke: And, as you know -- it's a matter of record naturally -- on May 9th, 1932 we declared a strike, and in every port on the Coast all the longshoremen walked off the job. We set up twenty-four hour picket lines and started soup kitchens to feed our people and requested the aid and assistance of all other unions. We had quite a rough time.

As you know, eventually the National Guard was called out. It was, I guess, the first time that tear gas was used against striking workers. The tear gas was used right near the Ferry Building. Actually, it was discovered later on that the salesman for the company that manufactured the tear gas was actually giving a demonstration to show how effective it was.

Many of us were just curious. We didn't know what in the world was up. We all stood around there watching. It was out on the sidewalk by the Ferry Building. The first thing you know he started firing the tear gas shells amongst us and we weren't doing anything. There was no ships there. There was no picketing there. (Our Union Hall was at 113 Steuart Street, which is the first block off of the Embarcadero off of Mission Street.) And that, of course, started a bit of disturbance and so forth, and naturally at that time it was claimed that the strikers had threatened police and all that sort of stuff. It was not so. And eventually, of course, we had the killing of two of our men who were shot down in cold blood between Embarcadero and Steuart Street.

Jones: That was the "Bloody Thursday."

Bulcke: Yes. I was across the street at the time. There was a Texaco Service Station. I had a little old Model-T Ford and one of the tires was low. I was in the station checking that tire when I saw this car stopping in the middle of the intersection. Two policemen jumped out with rifles and they started firing into the crowd, jumped back in and off they went. I helped pick up one of the men, who fortunately did not die, by the name of Hart, but he was incapacitated for many years.

Jones: What was his first name?



Bulcke: Can't recall his first name. It's a matter of record. He recovered but was unable to work. For many years the local longshoremen supported him with financial aid. He was staying with some relatives back in Michigan somewhere on a farm. He came out many years later, but he never worked on the waterfront again. I saw him, probably six or seven years ago, when he came back to visit.

The other two were killed. Bordoise and Sperry. Sperry was a veteran of the First World War. Bordoise was not even a member of our union. He was a member of the Cooks' Union and he was volunteering his help in our soup kitchen and he was walking back. Our soup kitchen was on Embarcadero Street, between Market and Mission, upstairs. He had just finished his shift and he was walking back and was going to the Union Hall to report that he had finished his shift when he got caught in this and was killed.

That, of course, as everyone knows, was called "Bloody Thursday" but that resulted in the only successful general strike that occurred in this country. It didn't last long, but for a few days the entire labor movement in San Francisco quit working. There wasn't a street car that ran. There was no transportation, public transportation of any kind, and only restaurants authorized by the joint strike committee were open and allowed to operate. Everything else was closed down.

#### UNION RECOGNITION

Bulcke: That, of course, eventually resulted in the arbitration and the arbitration board appointed by President Roosevelt. The eventual decision that came down granted, first of all, recognition of the union, granted the hiring hall, which is still in effect today, and granted the six-hour day.

That does not mean that the men work only six hours. It means that the first six hours between eight and five are straight time and from then on it's time and a half. In other words, if you started work at eight in the morning, your overtime starts at three PM. You start to work at nine, your overtime starts at four. You start to work at ten, your overtime starts at five. But any time from five



Bulcke: o'clock on, no matter when you started, it's time and a half.

Jones: Was that 1935 or 1934 when you won that?

Bulcke: After the arbitration board was appointed, the union agreed to go back to work, pending the results of the arbitration. So they went back to work on July 31st of '34 and the decision came out sometime in December. At that particular time, part of the settlement was that in order to establish a basic and recognized group of longshoremen a registration procedure was established where each longshoreman was given a number which they still have today. You had to show in order to be registered -- this was to do away with men that during the strike had scabbed or had not been on the waterfront for very long -- that you had worked at least twelve months out of the previous twenty-four months, if not consecutively. You had to be able to show that you had worked that much on the waterfront in order to become a basic, registered longshoreman.

Jones: And now we're up into about 1935.

We are interested in any of your views and recollections of Earl Warren and how he developed. When did you first personally meet Warren?

Bulcke: I met Warren personally only once and that was after he was governor of the state of California.

Jones: I guess you're not the man to talk to about Alameda County affairs.

#### KING, RAMSAY, CONNER CASE

Bulcke: Of course, we got to know Earl Warren during the prosecution of King, Ramsay and Conner. They were members of the Firemen's Union and they were accused of having murdered an assistant engineer aboard a vessel over in Alameda.

Jones: George Alberts, as I recall. Did the longshoremen make any overt act against the prosecution of this Point Lobos case? Did you pass any resolutions accusing the prosecution of being biased?

Bulcke: Yes, the locals and most locals passed resolutions to





Bulcke: that effect, that this was a frame-up, that this was an attempt to destroy the union, particularly the Marine Firemen's Union, and that the men who had been accused of this crime were the leaders of that union. It was the contention of not only the ILWU locals but most of the trade unions in the Bay Area that this was an out-and-out frame-up in order to attempt to destroy the growing strength of the trade unions in this area.

Jones: Well, seeing it happened in Oakland, and Mr. Warren was district attorney, did you have any personal reaction or did you know anybody that did toward him? He didn't actually participate did he?

Bulcke: He participated in it, as my recollection goes, and he directed the prosecution. As I say, the general feeling of the trade union movement at the time and the members of the unions was to the effect that he was a tool being used by the anti-labor forces, anti-union forces, using his position to attempt to destroy or weaken the strength of the unions, which were becoming more and more outspoken. I served on a defense committee which was established by the various unions and went around to other unions to explain the situation and ask for donations so that we could have money to fight the case. But the men were convicted and served some time in San Quentin. They were eventually pardoned, not pardoned but released during the Olson administration.

Jones: Let me ask you this. I think that it was Sid Roger of the Dispatcher who mentioned to me that you had been active in trying to counteract this placing of the Japanese in the internment camps.

#### JAPANESE LONGSHOREMEN

Bulcke: Yes, that was later, during the early part of the war, just after Pearl Harbor. At that time I was president of the longshore local here in San Francisco, Local 10, and we had two members of our union who were of Japanese descent. One is Carl Joneda. He is on the waterfront today.

Jones: And he's still in Local 10?

Bulcke: He's a working longshoreman, yes.



Jones: And what is the name of the other gent?

Bulcke: I can't remember the name of the other. He was born in the Hawaiian Islands. They were both arrested first and I got both out of jail twice.

Jones: The police arrested them?

Bulcke: From the moment the war started, of course, they brought in all sorts of security guards. And just the appearance of a Japanese disturbed these, and they picked these people up.

Jones: San Francisco police officers officially or were they...?

Bulcke: Many of them were security guards that were placed on the docks supposedly for the purpose of seeing that there was no sabotage and so forth, which was perfectly all right.

So three different times I got Yoneda out of jail by merely going down to the police station and explaining that he was a member of the union and that he had been working as a longshoreman for many years, and --

Jones: Well, these arresting officers. Were they off-duty policemen acting as security guards, or were they Pinkerton guards?

Buclek: Some of them were San Francisco policemen and, you know, I would be notified that he had been arrested and was in jail, and I would go down to the police station, explain it, and they would release him. There were no charges. They were just holding him on suspicion that -- after all he was a Japanese and that was that.

#### INTERMENT

Bulcke: Eventually, of course, they picked up all the Japanese and put them in the internment camps. Carl Yoneda was married and had a little boy. And under the rules, they were going to take him and the boy. His wife is Caucasian. So they were going to take him and the boy and she said, "Nothing doing. You are going to take my husband and my boy, you are going to take me." And she insisted on it.



Jones: She was a citizen?

Bulcke: Yes, she was a citizen. And they ended up in the Owens Valley camp that is called Manzanar. During that time I was a member of the Fish and Game Commission, so fortunately I drove an automobile with a state license on it. So I went to Manzanar and when I got to the gates they said, "What do you want here?" And I said, "I'm state fish and game commissioner and it's our understanding that the way the camp is run that a lot of sewage is getting into the streams and I want to inspect the streams and see whether or not pollution is taking place." So they let me in. So, instead of that, I visit with Carl and his wife and got information that was helpful in correcting some of the situations that were existing there at the time in that camp.

Jones: Of course you couldn't get him out, or anything?

Bulcke: No, and shortly afterwards he was requested and agreed to join the U.S. Army as an interpreter and was sent over to the Far East where he did excellent work.

Jones: He must have gotten a commission as an interpreter.

Bulcke: They used him a great deal to talk Japanese soldiers into giving up. He was decorated and had very high standing as far as military service was concerned.

Jones: That's good. And he's still working?

Bulcke: He's still working as a longshoreman. The other Japanese man, after he got out of incarceration I forget where, went back to the Islands, to Hawaii, where he was born, and I met him there about five or six years ago. He's also still working as a longshoreman. He is a member of the ILWU over in the Hawaiian Islands.

Jones: You served on the Fish and Game Commission. Can you tell me the details? You were appointed by Governor Olson and then you ran into some snags when Governor Warren took office, which was in 1942.

#### OLSON CAMPAIGN

Bulcke: No, not quite that. What happened was this: I was,



Bulcke: among others, quite active in the campaign to elect Olson as governor, Patterson as lieutenant governor and at the time Senator Downey... so I was authorized by the union to travel.

At that time I was vice president of ILWU Local 10 and our local was on record in favor of the election of these three people and they authorized me to travel around the state to speak to various groups -- workers -- and I traveled quite a bit around the state working in this campaign.

At the conclusion of this campaign, after the election was over with, Governor Olson asked me if I was willing to serve in his administration. I thanked him and told him that I was not interested in any position in the government, that I had a job and I wanted to stay on the waterfront. I was vice president at the time of the election. I became president shortly thereafter.

So Governor Olson said, "There must be some position that you could serve your membership and at the same time you could do a job for the state."

I told him that the only position that I felt that I could be of use to our own membership and at the same time serve the state was as a member of the San Francisco Harbor Commission -- which, by the way, was not a paying job. They were allowed, at that time, minimal expense when they met, but there was no salary attached to it. And Olson thought that this was proper. At that time the law governing the State Harbor Commission was to the effect that the harbor commissioners were nominated by the governor and required state senate confirmation.

I was nominated to the harbor commission and all hell broke loose. The newspapers screamed to the effect that "You might as well turn the harbor over to Bridges," I was "Bridges' right-hand-man." There was a great deal of adverse publicity on this and I went to see the governor and I asked him to take my name off, to withdraw it.

Jones: Why was that?

Bulcke: I felt that the forces opposing this nomination were going to make more capital out of this attacking the governor...





Jones: Did they call you Communist?

Bulcke: Oh yes, we were all a "bunch of Reds." So the state senate voted down the confirmation.

### LABOR VOICE ON FISH AND GAME

Bulcke: Sometime later on in '39 the governor asked me if I would serve as a member of the State Fish and Game Commission. We had and still have an organized group of fishermen in the ILWU. I discussed it with those locals and they were elated. They pointed out that this was the first time in the history of California that a labor man would have a voice on the Fish and Game Commission. At that time, the Fish and Game Commission members were appointed by the governor and did not require confirmation. In other words, you served at the pleasure of the governor and he would merely appoint you and that was it.

So, this particular appointment they couldn't do anything about. So, immediately a movement started in the senate and in the assembly and it took a while. It took over a year, but they amended the law to the effect that the fish and game commissioners also required the confirmation of the senate.

Jones: That wouldn't be retroactive, though, would it?

Bulcke: Yes, it was. When the law went into effect, the governor had to either name someone else or renominate whoever he wanted from the old commission. The commission ceased to be a commission. The new law set it up. There were some good points to that law. It sets up that the commission doesn't serve at the pleasure of the governor. You have a term, seven years, so that they drop off every year and of course they can be renominated.

So the governor renominated all five of us and when it came for confirmation -- and by that time I had served over a year and one half as a commissioner -- I appeared before a different committee, different individuals, there was no objection raised and I was confirmed.

Then the governor said, "Well, look, I'm not going to spell out the terms of any of you. Put your names in the hat and draw." I drew the four-year term.



Bulcke: One drew three and another one drew two, and five and six and so forth.

Naturally, in 1942, when Governor Olson was defeated by Warren at the time, my term did not expire until January 15, 1944. So I served almost two years during the time that Warren was governor. It was during that period of time that I met him first personally. I had a very short discussion with him -- something in connection with fish and game. I don't recall what it was. He stated to me that he was satisfied with the work that I was doing. However, I didn't expect to be renominated because, after all, I was a registered Democrat and he was a registered Republican and I understood very well that he was obligated to appoint someone else when my term expired.

Jones: That was your first personal contact?

Bulcke: And the only direct one.

Jones: What were your conclusions about him personally when this fuss was all over? Did you feel that he was anti-labor?

#### WARREN NOT PRO-LABOR

Bulcke: My personal feeling during the time that he was governor was that he was not pro-labor. Some of the actions or expressions that he used at the time certainly were not in line with what most of the trade unions felt the governor should have said or done.

Jones: What, for example?

Bulcke: He was against quite a bit of the legislation that our unions were for. I can't recall them off hand because I did appear a number of times before certain committees -- of course, he wasn't present -- speaking in favor of certain pro-labor laws. One, for instance, I know had to do with increasing the amount of money a longshoreman received when he was injured on the dock. Compensation, in other words. It did not pass. It was a feeling that the governor had expressed -- and he had -- opposition to that kind of legislation.

There were others that I can't offhand recall,



Bulcke: so I say that my personal thinking at the time -- and I can say safely that the majority of the trade union leadership in the state felt pretty much the same way -- that he was not pro-labor at all and that whenever possible he was opposing the type of legislation that the trade unions were in favor of.

Jones: Did you know Carey McWilliams?

Buclek: I know Carey McWilliams, yes.

Jones: I did a little research on an article that he did in the New Republic for October 18, 1943, and among other things he said -- this is paraphrasing -- that Warren's almost first act when he reached office was to bounce him, McWilliams, and he described Warren as "Completely the creature of the Hearst-Chandler-Knowland clique." Also, Mr. Warren, in the opinion of Mr. McWilliams, was the darling of the Associated Farmers and he went on to say that Warren was also "the particular pet of the great shipping, financial, agricultural, and industrial interests." He described these interests here as "the smoothest functioning big business machine" just about anywhere.

And this, of course, was a knock on Warren, who during the war years was being groomed for the presidency on the GOP ticket, of course, and naturally he didn't have a go because F.D.R. decided to run again.

As you recall it today, how did you and the ILWU feel about such charges? We know that Warren's career was certainly helped by Joseph Knowland and the Tribune.

Buccke: Definitely.

Jones: Did the ILWU pass any anti-Warren resolutions? Were you actively against him because he was anti-labor or did you feel that he was just carrying on his duties as a Republican?

#### UNION OPPOSITION

Bulcke: No. There were a number of resolutions passed along that line. I can't recall the exact whereases and resolves in them. But I know that a number of



Bulcke: resolutions were passed expressing indignation along that line as Carey McWilliams indicated. This was the general feeling of the trade union movement.

You see, I served for one year, 1940 to '41, as secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco CIO Council, the same as the AFL Labor Council except that it was the CIO. At that time we had a number of CIO unions and it was a very active council. It went on even after I was no longer secretary and during the administration of course I was a member of the executive board of that council. Many, many resolutions were adopted there expressing similar views and pointed out that he was anti-labor. The feeling was -- and it was expressed in many of those resolutions -- that he was, you might say, the voice of the anti-labor forces, the Hearst and Knowland group.

Jones: Let's try Mr. McWilliams again. I think, as I recall this article, McWilliams is trying to make the point that Warren was fully aware of and directly or indirectly connected with what McWilliams called the "...ruthless methods of the open shop, the Red squad and the labor frame-up of the 1920's and early '30's." And at this period the Republican anti-labor forces had taken a shift into a sort of glossy, public relations approach because they couldn't any longer openly fight pensions and social security and collective bargaining and these vital gains for labor that came through F.D.R.'s New Deal. What do you think was Warren's participation in such gamey activities as labor frame-ups? What about the Red squad? Do you know of any examples of labor frame-ups and how did the Red squads function?

#### THE MODESTO BOYS

Bulcke: Well, the biggest labor frame-up, as we claim, was the King-Ramsay-Conner case, and then prior to that was the "Modesto boys," as we called them. The Modesto situation happened during the '36 strike.

Jones: I've only seen reference to that. What happened?

Bulcke: That was during the tanker strike, which was 1935.

Jones: These tankers were ocean going...

Bulcke: Standard Oil and all the rest of them. What happened





Bulcke: was that -- I forget how many -- five, I believe, men believed this provocateur (he was not a member of the ILWU, but of one of the seafaring unions) and they were going to go and investigate in Modesto, supposedly a place where they were hiring scabs for these ships.

Jones: Why Modesto? Isn't that inland?

Bulcke: Yes it is, but you know it's in the Valley. And that was nothing new because in the '34 longshore strike a lot of the scabs were recruited in the Valley because most of them were drifters. This was a supply of labor. These men went in a car to go and investigate this, and they were stopped long before they got to Modesto and the car was found to have sticks of dynamite in it which none of the men knew was in the car, except the one man that was the instigator. And he turned state's evidence and testified to the effect.

Jones: Who was in the car?

Bulcke: There was one longshoreman and his name was Boyle. He later on was deported and he's dead now. He died several years ago. He was a Belgian, by the way. The others -- I can't remember their names. The records, of course, are available. Except for the longshoreman, I didn't know any of them personally. But, they were stopped by special Standard Oil police, not state police. That was an obvious frame-up.

Jones: In downtown Modesto?

Bulcke: No, no. They were picked up along the road long before they got to Modesto. I can't remember exactly where. They were convicted, and they were sent to Quentin on the charge that they were going to blow up this hotel where the scabs were being hired. That was the accusation, you see, and others. Attempts were going to be made to blow up their refineries and all this sort of stuff. The result of it was that they were convicted.

Jones: Well, that's an example of a frame-up.

Bulcke: Yes, that was a typical anti-labor frame-up and the Belgian, who didn't happen to have citizenship here, was released if he would accept voluntary deportation. So, he was sent back.



Jones: This wasn't connected with Mr. Warren.

Bulcke: Not directly. I think they were picked up in Contra Costa County. I don't recall exactly where, but this is an example of a typical frame-up. But I wouldn't say that Mr. Warren had something directly to do with it. He may have had knowledge of it, but I don't know, because his activity during the King, Ramsay and Conner situation indicated pretty much that he was inclined to go along with that kind of set up.

Jones: It goes without any argument that a man who's spent his lifetime in public office like Warren is bound to have his detractors and make mistakes. What do you think, in Mr. Warren's career before he went on the Court, was his worst mistake? Was it the Japanese internment situation? The case is made that he was an attorney and the legal leader and he should have known better than the layman that interning 70,000...

Bulcke: Well, that was the general opinion of most of the trade union people and also of trade union attorneys who pointed out that, as an attorney and particularly attorney general and the rest of it, he should have known or spoken out against this type of thing.

Jones: I've seen in print somewhere that some attorneys claimed that he wanted to keep the Japanese out after the war.

Bulcke: I don't know. I wouldn't personally know that he held that position. But at the time it happened, I know that we appealed to him to speak out and he didn't or went along with it wholeheartedly.

Jones: So you consider this his major...

Bulcke: It's one of the issues that he certainly failed to take a position that he himself as an attorney should have. From a legal standpoint he should have known that this was not constitutional and that the hysteria that existed was supported by his support of that incarceration of those people.

Jones: Conversely, why was he so successful as a politician? Why did he repeatedly get hundreds of thousands of Democratic votes in his rise to governor from county district attorney? Was it his charm? Many people



Jones: thought it was his integrity, he gained the trust of the voters. Or do you think he was just fortunate in being in the right place at the right time?

Bulcke: I think there are a couple of points. Number one, we have to keep in mind that at that time there was a great hue and cry when any progressive union demanded better wages and working conditions. They were either infiltrated by Communists or Communist-inclined, or they were Communist.

### RED SQUADS

Jones: I see references to Red squads. I never was conversant with Red squads. Was this a local situation?

Bulcke: Yes, the Red squad in San Francisco was a group of San Francisco policemen and plainclothesmen whose major job was to arrest people and charge them with activities that were supposedly Communist-inclined or supporting Communist positions and so forth. This was a regular harrassment.

Jones: Was this in the thirties that we are talking about now?

Bulcke: This was before the World War II. And the, of course, particularly when the Dies committee started...

Jones: When was that? '34?

Bulcke: No -- it started somewhere around '38 to '39. I was one of the persons that Dies named as being a Communist, shortly after I was appointed to the Fish and Game Commission so it must have been...

Jones: That's quite an honor today...

Bulcke: Big headlines saying "Bulcke Named as a Red by Dies." Of course, he never subpoenaed me. This was the kind of smear tactics that was used.

Jones: Did you ever go to a Communist party meeting?

Bulcke: Well, I went to public meetings. I mean, I've been to meetings where Communists addressed the meeting. They were not Communist meetings.

Jones: Yes, you've never gone to Communist meetings.



Bulcke: No, no. Then the next thing that happened -- this was later on and had no bearing on Mr. Warren -- but the next thing that happened, Yorty, as you know, just re-elected mayor of Los Angeles, started the small Dies committee in California. It was later on taken over by his partner, Tenney.

Jones: Oh, I remember the Tenney committee. He was a musician.

Bulcke: The Tenney committee was started by Yorty. Yeah, what a musician he was. You know he claimed to have written the song "Mexicali Rose." He actually bought it from a guy in Tijuana. Well, what happened was this: Yorty started this committee. It's a small Dies committee on the state level. Then when Yorty was elected to Congress, Tenney took it over.

We have a rule in the union (in the local unions, ILWU) that you can only serve two terms and then you must be out one term. In other words, you can only serve two terms in any full-time office. So I had been vice president, I had been president twice, and I was in between. My term had run out.

Jones: Oh, that explains why you served on occasion.

Bulcke: That's right. See, you are limited to two years. Of course, not in the international. In the international you can be re-elected each two years. I was re-elected. I served almost fourteen years as international vice president.

This was during a time when I was working on the waterfront. I always did when I was not in office. I always did go back to work.

#### TENNEY COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

Bulcke: During this particular time I was not an officer and I got subpoenaed by the Tenney committee. The headlines said, "Bulcke and Schneiderman Subpoenaed." They tied me to William Schneiderman who was, I believe, secretary to the Communist party of San Francisco or something like that. Or was, anyway.

The funny part of it was, to give the whole story its proper setting, during the years that we had





Bulcke: the labor's Non-Partisan League, which John L. Lewis originally started, it was quite an active political group statewide. It was quite active nationally, but it was quite active here in California. Tenney was a member of the executive committee. So was I. We used to meet in Fresno, Los Angeles, on Non-Partisan League business.

George Kidwell of the Bakery Wagon Drivers Union and others, Jack Shelley, the former mayor, former Congressman, was part of it. He was on the executive board. So I knew Tenney pretty well. So here I am subpoenaed before him for his committee in San Francisco. I am introduced at the hearing, he points to William Schneiderman and says, "Mr. Bulcke, do you know that gentleman?"

And I say, "Sure, Jack, I know him."

And he says, "Don't address me as 'Jack'. Address me as 'chairman' or address me as 'Assemblyman.'"

I said, "All right, Jack," and he got a little flustered and he said, "Well, what's your answer?"

And I said, "Well, what's the question?"

So the reporter read back again, so I said, "Well, as I told you, Jack, you should know whether I know him or not."

He said, "What do you mean by that?"

I said, "You're the person who introduced me to him." He looked at me and said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, remember the previous time that you ran for re-election for the Assembly I was down south and you asked me to take you to the longshore local in San Pedro and introduce you and ask for their support. No, not the longshore local, the warehousemen's local, ILWU, in Los Angeles."

He said, "Yes."

I said, "You know, on the way back to the hotel, you said, 'I'd like to stop over here at the Communist headquarters. They do control a lot of votes and I'd like to go in and talk to them.' I went along with you and there were two other people



Bulcke: with us." and I said, "Yeah, you introduced me to Mr. Schneiderman."

The first question Tenney asked me was did I know who he was. I said, "Yes," and he said, "You know what position he holds?" I said, "As far as I know he's an officer of the Communist party." "When did you first meet him?" That's when I told him that he had introduced me.

He looked so flustered and he said, "We'll have a five minute recess." So I walked out into the hall and lit up a cigarette and he comes over and sticks out a hand and says, "Jerry, for goodness sakes, I'm only doing what I have to do. I'm just a chairman. There's nothing personal in the matter."

So I looked at him and I said, "Jack, for my money, you stink." I turned around and walked away from him. When the meeting came to order I went back in again and he said, "No further questions," and he excused me. That's a matter of record in Sacramento -- I can tell you that. (Laughs)

Jones: That's very interesting.

Bulcke: That has nothing to do with the ... but here was a man that came from labor. He was a member -- he's dead now (God rest his soul) -- of the Musicians' Union.

Jones: If you didn't think that Warren was absolutely anti-labor, he wasn't pro-labor.

#### PERSONAL OPINION

Bulcke: I would say that my personal conclusion is that he was anti-labor...

Jones: What year was this?

Bulcke: During his term as attorney general and definitely during his term as governor. He was a smooth operator. He's a brilliant man in his own way and he operated in such a way that labor found it very difficult to get any pro-labor legislation adopted.

Jones: Well, did you hold it against him personall? I mean, the man's background as a life-long Republican.



Bulcke: We were not opposed to him on the basis of his political affiliations. It was what he didn't do. There was a lot of omission as much as commission. In other words you never found him on the side of labor supporting what we felt was the type of legislation that would better the condition of the working man. I know when I say that, that was the feeling of the leadership of most of the trade unions, regardless of whether they were AFL or CIO.

Jones: Did your feelings about Mr. Warren begin to change when he got on the Court? Like with the Brown school case?

Bulcke: Well, myself and others have often expressed our thoughts on that, that we felt -- at least it was my conclusion and it was the conclusion of others -- that once he got on the Court, where he really could act without the pressures or favors that he had to perform, that there he really acted as he really felt.

But up to that time he was in a position where the pressures that were put on him were such that he had to act the way he did. There was no question about it. Everybody knew that he was being groomed to be president of the United States. Naturally he was staying pretty close to the forces that had the means, the money and the power, at the level he was at. So he ended up going to the high Court and there, of course, he could really act in the manner that he felt was right without having to worry about anything because this was as far as he could go and wanted to go at that time. He had arrived.

So we were all, you might say, pleasantly surprised, and you have to admit that he did and has done a terrific job.

Jones: At any time in the early period that you knew of his activities, did you ever have any inkling or thoughts that he had the capabilities to rise to the heights of the greatest liberal chief justice in our nation?

Bulcke: No.

Jones: The only thing I could think of was that at the time of the extremely radical movement in '46 or '47 when he came out for a sort of a forerunner of Medicare. Some people claim that he wasn't really sincere on that. That he knew it would not pass but it gave him the liberal...



Bulcke: Yes, that was generally the reaction, as I recall it, that it was an attempt to gain support from people that normally wouldn't support him. It was, on the face of it, a good program. But it was all lip service, nothing substantial.

Jones: Somebody said he could have gone to work belting the committees that killed the health insurance bills.

Bulcke: He could have. He was in the position where he had the power to sway the action of the various committees, but I recall the feeling was that this was just a political trick to get more support from the more liberal-minded and the older people and so forth because of his ambition at the time and to keep in the foreground as much as possible and that kind of thing. Everyone had pretty much the same opinion that he was adding up, trying to be President of the United States.

Jones: When the Red squad bit in San Francisco, you didn't get arrested?

Bulcke: No.

Jones: Getting back to Paul Heide again, he actually got arrested by the Red squad walking up the railroad track by R. G. Reynolds Detective Agency and he went to trial with another fellow. He was exonerated, but they were trying to get arrested to test the picketing laws, and they couldn't get arrested, as you know very well.

### STRIKE ARRESTS

Bulcke: Well, I was arrested three times during the '34 strike, but that was in connection with roughing up a few strike breakers. I was arrested three times in one night. I always got out. I had a little old model-T Ford, 1924 model, and I was picket captain at Pier 37, Grace Lines passenger ships. That was one of the places where the scabs stayed. They had scabs living on one of the ships.

Thirty-seven is Bay Street. We had some ways of finding out when some of these strike breakers would come out. We would follow them and try to shake them down if we could and work them over.





Jones: What did you work them over with?

Bulcke: My fist. We never used any weapons of any kind. Also, we shook them down and if they had any money on them why we took it away from them.

Jones: What did you do with the money?

Bulcke: We split it between the soup kitchen and ourselves.  
(Laughs) That was the rule.

Jones: Fifty-fifty?

Bulcke: Yeah. As far as I know I think everybody did, but whether somebody shortchanged the soup kitchen I don't know. But anyway, the guys generally did. So, anyway I had an understanding with the other guys that were with me. There were four of us. They would run. I wouldn't run because they could pick the license number of the car to get me anyway.

So I got arrested and the cop took me down to the Kearney Street, the old Hall of Justice. So I was booked. The other guys who were with me generally got away. We had arrangements for bail, so they bailed me out and the sergeant in charge said, "All right, you'd better go home now." And I said, "I can't. I'm on picket duty and I have to get back to the water front." He said, "Stay out of trouble." I said, "Sure." So two hours later I'm back in again. Of course there was a different guy in charge. He didn't know I had been there before. So I got bailed out again.

The third time, the guy was there who had been there the second time. He said, "For Christ's sake, this time I am going to throw the key away." I said, "Look, all I was doing was chasing a scab. I didn't catch up with him." So I got bailed out again. Of course, when the strike was over, all those things were dropped. There were never any trials.

We had quite a little trouble with certain parts of the police force, but on the other hand there were a lot of decent guys working on the police force. Many of them, their fathers were longshoremen. There was a great deal of understanding and sometimes the police officers would look the other way.



Bulcke: I would say that eighty percent of the police force in San Francisco at that time were actually in favor of the men who were on strike and went out of their way to...

Jones: You certainly have a happier climate here than San Pedro.

Bulcke: Seattle was pretty good. Well; after all, you know, there were two guys killed in Seattle, one guy killed in Portland, one guy killed in San Pedro.

Jones: Think of the boys in Texas. They really must have had trouble.

#### SUCCESS OF ILWU

Jones: In the opinion of many people, the longshore union is one of the most successful of all unions in the history of this country, and it certainly has been evinced this week when you got thousands and thousands of men who want to work for your union. I think it was four hundred jobs. Last time, two years ago you had 23,000 apply for...

Bulcke: Seven hundred jobs.

Jones: Well, what in your estimation is the main factor that contributed to the success of your union? At the time when you started there was brutality on both sides, there were Red smears and they tried to deport Harry Bridges and he's won through all court cases. Now here you are: the union that has probably done more to solve automation -- at least live with it -- and you are miles ahead of the Gulf and East Coast ILA. Why is that, aside from leadership? Are you democratic and have better communications?

Bulcke: That's the key to it. First of all, the structure of the union. We have four international officers. They had three for a while and they have four again. The point is that we have honest elections. The membership elects delegates to the convention and they speak their piece according to what their membership instructs them to. We have no ballot box stuffing. We discuss and keep communications open between the members and the top leadership constantly.

We have had established for quite a while now --



Bulcke: not regular meetings, but work sessions, we call them -- where anyone in the union comes in and can raise any question and can get answers. This method, this absolute democratic way of doing, is the real key to success, because the membership knows what goes on. They may not always be in agreement with the proposals of the leadership, but the explanations are made and they know what's going on and feel that they are part and can get up and speak their piece and they're not going to get dumped when they go out. They're not going to get in trouble. They'll get into an argument with someone. Absolute democracy is the key to it.



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Earl Warren Oral History Project

Joseph W. Chaudet

## A PRINTER'S VIEW

An Interview Conducted by  
Frank N. Jones







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Joseph W. Chaudet: A PRINTER'S VIEW

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Joseph William Chaudet (born 1910) was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to document his recollections of his father's role in the Oakland Masonic Lodge and the political activities of Earl Warren's district attorney days, and his own long career in Alameda County labor and civic affairs.

Interviewer: Frank Neville Jones, for several years publicist for the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California. Research developed by the Regional Oral History Office with guidance on general questions from principal investigators of the Earl Warren Project.

### Conduct of the

Interview: A single interview was conducted on May 8, 1969, in Mr. Chaudet's office at the East Bay Labor Journal, 1622 East 12th Street, Oakland, surrounded by the thump of presses and the pungent smell of printers' ink.

Editing: The transcribed taped interview was edited in the Regional Oral History Office by June Hogan. Mr. Chaudet reviewed the edited text and made additional comments to amplify or clarify his original remarks.

### Marrative Account of Mr. Chaudet and Progress of the

Interview: Joe Chaudet absorbed not only printing, but "affection for the trade union movement" from his father, who was active in Masonic and political activities in Oakland from the mid-twenties. "Hustling sheets" near the Oakland Tribune as a boy, Chaudet first saw Earl Warren and recognized the "distinguished looking dude" as the man his father had spoken about in Masonic affairs. Sworn into the San Francisco Typographical Union in 1931 by his father, Chaudet was active in San Francisco union affairs until he joined the East Bay Labor Journal early in World War II, rising to become business manager and publisher, serving three years as post-master of Oakland during Truman's presidency, and on the Port of Oakland Commission in the sixties.



Chaudet describes vividly the neighborhood character of Oakland in his youth, noting the national groups and the political role they played in the days of Mike Kelly and Ezra Decoto. He recalls the difficulties of labor organizing when "The American plan" and "sweet-heart contracts" were common and men did not join the union for fear of losing their jobs; being recognized as bargaining agent was the unions' major concern. Labor legislation of the period he describes as non-existent, as much because labor was not noticed as because of anti-labor feeling; "nobody could deliver a so-called labor vote. In those days, politics were built on lodges, your friends, word of mouth."

Particularly interesting is his description of Earl Warren as Grand Master of the Masonic Blue Lodge, which he feels was planned by the lodge to give Warren his first statewide exposure after he became district attorney.

The Social Security Act of 1936 he credits with saving the economy during the Depression; and the Wagner Act as the impetus to labor to organize, noting COPE's role as parallel to the old neighborhood electioneering.

Commenting on statewide politics, Chaudet touches on Governor Olson, the Kenny-Warren 1946 campaign, labor's disenchantment with Warren in 1950, and the conviction that if Warren had been the presidential candidate in 1948 and Dewey the vice presidential, the Republicans would have won.

Gabrielle Morris  
Regional Oral History Office



### EAST OAKLAND HOME

Jones: Joe, tell us where you were born and the address and what your father did.

Chaudet: As far as the Chaudets are concerned, I'd like to state that my mom and dad moved over here in the early 1900's and settled on Seventy-third Avenue out in East Oakland. My father was a printer. He had traveled all over the United States. He had sailed through the Golden Gate in 1903 and met my mother. They were married in about 1904, and they moved over to East Oakland that year. Seventy-third Avenue in those days was nothing but cow pasture.

My dad was working in San Francisco at the time and that's where most of the Chaudets were born. I had a brother that was born the week of the earthquake and fire, Julian, who lived until he was twelve years old, and I have an older sister, Mary, who was born in San Francisco. I was born in San Francisco. I was born on Sixteenth and Bryant Streets, across from the ball park. I think it was the custom in those days for all of the Irish -- and my mother's maiden name was Sullivan and the Mission district was replete with Irish that were part and parcel of the Sullivan family -- for the young girls to run home to mama so that she could be midwife and help with the arrival of the new additions to the family. That had happened with my older brother Jules, my sister Mary and myself. Then along came my younger brother Fran, who was born in Hanneman Hospital. And then I had a younger sister Hallie who is now Mrs. Wood Wilkinson, and she was born out on Seventy-third Avenue.

### PRINTER FATHER

Chaudet: My dad was a printer, a good one. He had travelled all over the United States and had gone to the Theological Institute at Princeton, Kentucky, and had come out as an ordained Baptist preacher at an early age. But in the meantime he'd been taking printing or he was self-indentured to a printer in Princeton, Kentucky. So when he went home, down to Paducah, Kentucky and Grand Rivers,





Chaudet: Kentucky, his mother was so proud to have a Baptist preacher in the house he gave her the diploma and said, "Well, Mother, here is your diploma. I have my card in the International Typographical Union. I'm going to see a bit of the world."

So he took off and he didn't see her or the home for eight years. He had quite a checkered career and, as I say, he came through the Gate in 1903, after demonstrating the first linotype machine that was shown at the Paris Exposition in 1902. He took one look at San Francisco and says, "This is home." And with the exception of one or two trips after that, maybe more than that with my older brother and my older sister, the Bay Area was his home.

Jones: Could you say then that he could be credited with introducing linotype?

Chaudet: Oh, no. The linotype, Frank, was out here long before that. But he demonstrated the linotype machine at the Paris Exposition in 1902 for the Mergenthaler people. It was the first time that it had been seen in Europe as a perfected model. It was invented by a German or Swiss watchmaker by the name of Ottmar Mergenthaler, who perfected it. Dad went to France and then he took the grand tour all over Europe, worked in Japan, worked in the Phillippines, worked in the Islands, and then came through the Golden Gate, took one look and says, "I'm home."

He met my mother, who was working at the Alcazar Theater. She also prior to that time had worked for that great Chinese merchant, Sing Fat, I believe it was, over in San Francisco. He was a great Chinese merchant. She had worked there. And she and my dad got married; as I say, it was along about 1904. It was on September 9 that mom and dad got married, and they moved over here. I think it was to get away from all of the Sullivans, because the Irish have a way of moving in on all of the problems of their offspring's families. I think my dad, being an independent cuss, came on over here and so they settled out in East Oakland.



Jones: What year was that that he settled here?

Chaudet: About 1904 or 1905.

Jones: Now we're getting back into the good old days. What was your father's name?

Chaudet: Dad's name was James Julian Chaudet. He was born in Paducah, Kentucky and lived in Grand River, Kentucky and was raised in both Paducah and Grand River. He had grown up with Irving S. Cobb and knew Alben Barkley and, as I say, he became this itinerant printer and traveled all over the United States.

Jones: Was he a storyteller like those two?

Chaudet: Oh, I'll say so. He was a great man. I tell you he was a great dad.

Jones: Could you give just a line or two about your mother?

### THE SULLIVANS

Chaudet: My mom was a native California. She was born up on Jackass Hill, up in Amador County. She was one of a family of eight. She had six sisters and a younger brother who is still alive. One sister is still alive up in Carmichael. Her dad was, well, a teamster and he used to drive at Knight's Landing or Knight's Ferry, I don't know which it was around there, but up through Jackson. He used to drive a team of horses. He was also an itinerant prospector and had gone to Alaska during the gold rush. The family later migrated to Mill Valley and then into San Francisco. When the girls grew up, they all went to Notre Dame College there across from Mission Dolores. They were a very, very staunch Catholic family, a very devout Catholic family.

Jones: What was the name of the family?

Chaudet: Sullivan.

Jones: Oh, they fit right in out in the Mission!

Chaudet: Right out in the Mission. There were Sullivans



Chaudet: and there were the Merrills, Hollises, Carews, Cooks, and Feenans, and they all lived out there together.

My mother's younger sister married George Hollis, who was the president of the Typographical Union in San Francisco and president of the Labor Council over there. With my dad active in the Printers Union, I think it was just natural, Frank, that I would fall into it. But there they were, all of the Sullivans out in the Mission District and the Chaudets in Oakland. Everybody wondered about that combination: how the French with -- I think Dad had a smattering of Indian in him from his forebearers, who had been in Kentucky for generations -- how a Baptist and a Catholic got along. But I want to say we had possibly the most beautiful and wonderful home life that youngsters ever had, the full right of self-determination.

Jones: The ecumenical spirit prevailed long before . . .

Chaudet: It certainly did. And now we've all grown up and none of us go to the Catholic Church. Dad and Mom said, "Let them grow up and find out what they want to do." And so we all go to different churches, which is a great thing.

#### SAN FRANCISCO COMMUTE

Chaudet: But anyway, in those early days, Frank, Dad used to ride a bicycle up Seventy-third Avenue and that was Fitchburg. It was named after a man by the name of Fitch. Dad rode it up to what is now East Fourteenth Street. From Seventy-third Avenue he rode down to Thirty-second Avenue, which is Fruitvale, down Fruitvale Avenue, and then they'd put their bike on the steam train. When I say "they," we had a neighbor by the name of Frank Bonnington, who was active in the labor movement who also worked in San Francisco. All the way down to the end of Seventh Street on a steam train, off the steam train, onto a boat, over to San Francisco, out would come the bikes and ride up Market Street to where my dad was working at the San Francisco Chronicle when they first moved over here. And then later he went down



Chaudet: and worked at the old -- it was Wardel's paper, who was the perennial Democratic candidate for governor -- the Journal of Commerce. It was down at Annie and Jessie Streets.

Then in 1911, Fitchburg was incorporated into the city of Oakland and we lived on Seventy-third Avenue, which at that time was George Street. So in 1911 Fitchburg was incorporated into the city of Oakland, became part of the city of Oakland. Streetcars came in and from then on we had it made. There was no more bike riding for Dad and everybody there. But this is the way that they used to get to San Francisco.

Jones: What year was this?

Chaudet: Well, this was in the early 1900's, after the earthquake and fire. Fitchburg was incorporated, Frank, into the city of Oakland in 1911, and I was born just prior to that.

Jones: You went to schools here in Oakland?

Chaudet: I went to Lockwood School, which is on Sixty-eighth Avenue, and then I went to Fremont High School for a very disastrous six months. I had wanted to be a printer, and my dad didn't want me to be a printer. So then I went down to McClymonds High School, which was the Smith Hughes Trade School. I graduated from McClymonds High School in the early part of 1928.

My father -- at that time Dad was secretary of Oakland Typographical Union -- wanted me to take a job on this side of the Bay. I says, "No way. I'm going to get my own job." So I went to San Francisco and got my own job over there and learned my trade in San Francisco and was obligated as a journeyman printer. My father gave me the oath as a member of the San Francisco Typographical Union, and I became active in the labor movement in San Francisco, and was there up until the time I moved over to Oakland to work, which was right after the start of World War II.

Jones: And you've been a printer. You never had any other trade in organized labor?





### NEIGHBORHOOD OF PRINTERS

Chaudet: The only trade I had, Frank, was a printer. And incidentally, as I say, the people across the street, they were Bonningtons, they were printers too. Frank Bonnington, Sr., was a printer, Ted Bonnington was a printer, Len Bonnington was a printer, Margaret Bonnington was a printer, Uncle Jerry Bonnington was a printer, and Rolla Bonnington worked out here at the University of California Press. She was a proofreader. Then we had another young fellow on the street, a fellow by the name of Vic Scott, who became a printer, and then we had a neighbor up the street, Andy Ivaldi, who I think is still working for McKenzie-Harris in San Francisco.

We had a small hand press and we had type there. We'd set the cards for everybody in the neighborhood. I knew the printers case when I was about ten years old. I took printing in grammar school. I had two years in grammar school, three and a half years in high school, and from then on I've been at it, with the exception of the three years I was postmaster.

Jones: Maybe you could teach me how to spell.

Chaudet. Ha! And myself too.

Jones: Let's see now. You started working then just prior to 1930.

Chaudet: Right. 1928. I gottmy card in the early thirties.

Jones: Now what was your father's first name?

Chaudet: James Julian. A very, very pretentious name. James Julian Chaudet.

Jones: Now maybe I should ask you when did you first know Earl Warren? How did that come about? What was your father doing at the time?

Chaudet: Well, my dad was a printer and he came over here right after World War I and he went to work for the Oakland Tribune. Dad was a left-handed Frenchman. He was a Lafayette Frenchman, a Protestant Frenchman. Dad joined the Masonic Lodge. He joined Jewel Lodge in San Francisco, which



Chaudet: was a daylight lodge, which is rare. The Masonic order doesn't meet in daylight very often except in some of the big cities. But they had one over in San Francisco and it was for printers and theatrical people and for people who worked nights, and my dad was working nights at that time. He joined Jewel, demitted to Fruitvale Lodge 336 out on East Fourteenth Street Thirty-fourth Avenue.

Through his Masonic affiliations, through joining the Shrine, and then also through Earl Warren's former partner Ezra Decoto, who had been a district attorney of Alameda County and then later became a superior court judge -- I think at one time the firm's name was Decoto, Warren, and St. Sure. I could be wrong about that. However, Ezra Decoto and Earl Warren were associated in the law business.

Well, Dad being a pioneer out in East Oakland at Seventy-third Avenue -- we had many ethnic groups out there. We had the Portuguese and we had Negroes. We had the Italians and we had people of all races and colors and religions and creeds, and quite a few Irish. It was a wonderful neighborhood and in those days the people in politics would look to each little neighborhood for support. From Oakland going east, it was Brooklyn township at Brooklyn, which was Fourteenth Avenue. Then the next one was Fruitvale, after Fruitvale was Melrose, after Melrose was Fitchburg, after Fitchburg was Elmhurst, after Elmhurst was Stonehurst and then you got to the San Leandro line.

#### GAME OF POLITICS

Chaudet: So they'd look for leaders in the small communities and this was the old game of politics. You always looked for somebody who was a leader in each particular section. My dad was very highly respected because of his trade, being a printer, knowing the printed word, being able to speak very fluently, his world traveling, his extensive traveling all over the United States, and the people in the neighborhood looked up to him and trusted him.



Jones: Did he hold any elective office?

Chaudet: At no time, with the exception of the union office. Dad wasn't interested in holding elective offices any more than I was interested in holding an elective political office. But, nevertheless, the people in the neighborhood looked up to Dad. Through his association in knowing Ezra Decoto, he got to know Earl Warren. Ezra Decoto, who happened to be of Italian extraction, was also a member of the Shrine and a member of the Blue Lodge.

And so they had these people in these different neighborhoods, not only in East Oakland but throughout Oakland. You had a political boss at that time by the name of Mike Kelly, who had been a very, very strong Republican. He controlled the county. And they had these people all over that they could count upon that people in the neighborhood looked up to. So it was through that and through my dad's association with Ezra Decoto -- incidentally, the town of Decoto down in southern Alameda County was named after Ezra Decoto's family. The town of Decoto and also the Masonic Home at Decoto. And, as I say, there was a fellow by the name of Charlie Heyer who was a supervisor. There's a street out in Hayward named after Charlie Heyer.

All of these people had these good friends in all of these neighborhoods that were able to do some good political work for them during the early days and during the primaries and the general elections, people that were looked up to as leaders in their own little communities, because as I say, you used to have these. Fruitvale -- vacant land separated that from Melrose. Melrose -- vacant land separated that from Fitchburg. Fitchburg -- vacant land separated that from Elmhurst. Elmhurst -- vacant land separated that from Stonehurst. And so you had almost small little villages unto themselves.

#### ASSOCIATION WITH WARREN

Chaudet: Dad, being articulate, being a printer, was highly respected and had a good following among the people out there. Through his connections in Masonic



- Chaudet: Lodge and through his affiliation, through his activities in the city, through his activities in the labor movement, he was looked up to and it was through this that Earl Warren and Ezra Decoto and the people respected and liked Dad. And it was through this that the families got to know each other and I came to know Earl Warren.
- Jones: Do you remember the address or approximate location of the Warren and so forth offices at that time?
- Chaudet: They were downtown. I think they were one of the first ones that moved into the financial center building. It seemed to me and this is so long ago that this is something I can't remember, their office was downtown, but I believe that it later became Decoto, Warren, and Paul St. Sure. Paul St. Sure was connected with that group. I do remember that I was selling newspapers downtown, hustling sheets.
- Jones: About what year would this be when your father and the chief justice became acquainted?
- Chaudet: Oh, I'd say that this would be in the early twenties. Ezra Decoto, as I say, was a very, very fine individual, and I think it was through Ezra Decoto that my dad got to know Earl Warren, and then also, as I say, through the Shrine and through him being district attorney and everything else in Alameda County.
- Jones: And then about what year are we talking about now?
- Chaudet: I'd say it would be in the early twenties.
- Jones: Mr. Warren became D.A., appointed in '25 and elected in '26.
- Chaudet: It was prior to that. Dad knew him when he was an attorney with Ezra Decoto. Decoto was appointed to the Railroad Commission in 1925, and my dad knew Earl Warren prior to him being appointed in Decoto's place, then elected district attorney of Alameda County.
- Jones: I was going to ask you what this pleasant association between your father and Mr. Warren led to. Was it social and political or both?





Chaudet: Social and political and just, you know, a warm feeling and kind of a respect for each other, their opinions, and the respect that an individual has for another individual that he respects for the job that he's trying to do in the city.

Jones: Well, were you friends socially? I mean, did Mr. Warren come to your residence?

Chaudet: Earl Warren had been out at the home as well as Mr. Decoto on occasions. They stopped in. When Earl was campaigning and out in the neighborhood, he'd stop in to see Dad. But most of the time they met at either the Shrine or at Masonic functions in and around Oakland.

Jones: Can you recall the first time that you saw Mr. Warren?

#### DISTINGUISHED-LOOKING DUDE

Chaudet: Yes. I was hustling sheets downtown and I remember him going by. This was before he was district attorney of Alameda County, because I was working at the Tribune when I was fifteen. That would be 1925, because I was going to high school and I used to insert these sheets down there at the Oakland Tribune. But, right across the street from the financial center building, the red trains used to come in and I used to hustle sheets there. And I remember the first time that I had the pleasure of seeing him. He was always a distinguished-looking dude.

Jones: How was he dressed in those days?

Chaudet: Impeccably always.

Jones: He didn't wear his silk hat. I guess that was a little before that.

Chaudet: No, He was dressed, as I remember, in a business suit. And, as I say, I used to hustle sheets over there and I do remember that you weren't supposed to move on other corners, but newsboys had a happy way of doing it. So I'd cut on out and come across the street and walk down Franklin Street toward the Oakland Tribune to pick up either more papers or turn them in at night. And I do remember



Chaudet: and this is very vivid in my memory, Earl Warren standing on the corner right across from the Tribune talking to some gentleman, and as I went by I thought, "That is the man that my dad has spoken about."

Jones: Oh, I see. Your dad had mentioned him. That would be around '25.

Chaudet: '25, along in there.

Jones: Let's see. It would be about 1930, '32, before you were really mature enough to be cognizant of labor conditions. I was going to ask you about . . .

Chaudet: No, Frank. I was cognizant of labor conditions from the time I was able to understand, because my father had been a member of the Typographical Union since he was eighteen years old. In the days when Dad got his union card, you didn't serve an apprenticeship. Those were the days of handsetting type, and, if you were swift enough and quick enough, it made no difference -- you were hired. And they paid you, not by the hours, but by how many lines you set. This was the mark of how you became a member of the union or how you became a good printer.

#### UNION AFFECTION

Chaudet: My dad had joined the Typographical Union when he was eighteen years old. From the time he was married -- and Dad and Mom didn't get married until Dad was up in his thirties, way up in his thirties -- he had been all over the country, all over a good part of the world, and understood and valued the International Typographical Union. And so we grew up with respect for Mom and Dad, respect for God, respect for country, and a love and affection for the trade union movement.

Jones: Oh. That's a good complete answer. Could you discuss generally the conditions? What kind of a climate was it for organized labor in the late twenties?

Chaudet: Lousy.

Jones: According to what I can remember from history and



Jones: what I've read about, the three administrations of Harding and silent Cal and Mr. Hoover didn't exactly leave a legacy of being friendly to organized labor. What were the problems in the other unions? The printers, of course, have always been more or less organized, in comparison to the building trades. The election of F.D.R. was the turning point for organized labor, wasn't it, with the Wagner Act and so forth?

Chaudet: The Wagner Act.

Jones: Well, what were the problems that the labor unions faced in the twenties? Do you remember anything of the "American Plan?"

Chaudet: Yes. I remember here in Alameda County when building was going on, that, if they hired a union man they had to hire one non-union man or two non-union men to one union building tradesman. If anybody tried to get a loan from any of the alleged financial institutions of our county and of our state and they found out that they were employing the ratio of union men that they weren't supposed to, they didn't get the loan and they couldn't get material and they couldn't get anything.

Now, this comes to me from my dad. My dad was elected secretary of Oakland Typographical Union and he'd served all during the late Twenties and early Thirties and he served up until 1935. He'd been secretary of the Oakland Typographical Union all during the days of the open shop and the "American Plan." He had his offices down in, originally they were down on Broadway down around Seventh or Eighth Streets, and then they moved up into the Lurie Building, which is now part of the Oakland Tribune. And incidentally, his seniority and priority -- he was a linotype operator on the Oakland Tribune -- he maintained that until the day of his death, because in those days, and as it is now, when a man leaves a print shop and goes and works for the union, he still has his job. Then they moved over to the Labor Temple, which was down on Eleventh and Clay Streets. It was the A.F. of L. Labor Temple, Eleventh and Clay Streets. The carpenters had the only other good hall or big hall. That was all the Carpenters' Union. They



Chaudet: were on Twelfth Street down around Castro. But they had the steamfitters and they had the plumbers and they had some of the teamsters. The Teamsters' Local 70 had their own hall in the early thirties.

But these are the people that my dad was with day in and day out as he served as secretary of Oakland Typographical Union. And these are the days of the open shop and the "American Plan" here. And it was on this basis that not only Joe Chaudet but all of the Chaudets thoroughly understood what was going on relative to the fight between labor and industry.

### UNION RECOGNITION

Jones: Well, in those days generally, what was labor's major goal? Was it to organize more workers?

Chaudet: Organize. Wait a minute, Frank, I'll correct that. To be recognized. See, you had your old trades: your plumbers, your printers, the steamfitters in those days. Now it's a powerful union. They couldn't have had more than a handful of people. The thing was organize. Of course, the carpenters, you know, were big. But it was getting recognition that you were a union man and getting recognition that you had a union. It wasn't only organizing. Jiminy creepers, you could go on out and organize these people, but it was getting recognition and getting a signed contract from the employer, that he recognized the union as the collective bargaining agent.

Jones: Who were your enemies? Who were your foes in this? How did you reach memberships? If a man didn't belong to a union, how did you get him to come to a union? Did you use the paper?

Chaudet: Oh, yes, they've had labor papers here in Alameda County for years. Oh, ours, the East Bay Labor Journal, goes back til 1926.

Jones: I meant the general public. You can't reach a non-union man through a labor paper if he doesn't belong to a union. What about the daily press?

Chaudet: The daily press were no different then, Frank, than they are today -- antagonistic. They have no





Chaudet: love for the labor unions. They never did have, because of the fact that they realized -- and you're over 21, Frank, you know what the story is. When F.D.R. came in and we got the Wagner Act, we went on out and organized and did a great job and the C.I.O. came into being. There was no longer dealing with some of the people in the labor movement until you signed "sweetheart contracts." Then you had to deal with a tough, militant rank-and-file that were gigging their officers on, "these are our demands. These are the things we want." Well, they weren't servants anymore and they weren't subservient to the powers that be and to the industrialists.

#### SWEETHEART CONTRACT

Jones: Before we go on, would you give us your own definition of a "sweetheart contract?"

Chaudet: A "sweetheart contract?" That's when a group of employers and a group of labor leaders get together and the labor leader says, "Well, this is what the boys want." And the employer says, "Well, I don't think that I can pay that." And the labor leader says, "Well, maybe if you come up a penny, I can sell it to the boys, which is a lot below what they want, but I'll do my best to sell it to the boys. And I realize how tough it is for you to get by, but I'll go back and do my best to sell this contract."

And so the labor guy goes back and says, "They're tough. We'll have to strike. We haven't got a chance of getting your demands. However, I was able to pry a penny out of them or two cents an hour and I suggest that we take it." And to me that is a "Sweetheart deal" from way back. The guy wants to be respected; he wants to have people tip their hat to him as being a labor leader and he wants to get along.

Jones: Well, what were some of the problems that you faced in organizing, just building unions? The daily papers didn't help you; the radio never seemed to give information that I know of.

Chaudet: Fear. Fear of the individual that if he joined the union he'd lose his job. This was the greatest



Chaudet: thing, Frank.

Jones: Can you give me an example of that? Not in the printing trades, perhaps.

Chaudet: All right. Let me go over here. Here is Frank Smith, who has a construction outfit or a stove outfit, I don't care what it is. So, lo and behold, a union organizer comes around. Here's a fellow that's been with him for ten or fifteen years. You know, the boss gives him a half a day off every now and then, every two or three weeks or so, or maybe every two or three months. The boss sends him or the wife a box of candy when she has a new child or something. But he's not getting what he is supposed to get, what is a comparable union wage.

So along comes the union organizer and says, "Well, come on Charlie, how about signing up and coming along? We've got most of the plant organized." So the boss comes on out and he plasters a sign, "Anybody joining a labor organization will be fired immediately. "

So here's a fellow. He's worked there for ten or twelve years. He has a family. His son is about ready to go to college. His daughter is a senior in high school. There are two kids in high school and one in grammar school. He has a "blister," a mortgage on his house. He still owes money on his car. The refrigerator isn't paid for yet. So, here is the boss coming out and posting it. So he goes home and he talks to momma and he says, "I want to join the union." She says, "Charlie, what'll it mean?" "If I do, I'll get fired." "Well, this is what we have. This is what we're going to lose if you do."

So Charlie goes down and Charlie says, "I can't afford it. I can't join the union because I'll get fired and I'm in hock too much and my family needs this and needs that and needs this and needs that. Young Frank is about ready to go to college and Marie is in her senior year at high school and I need to get her dresses for the prom, and if I lose a month's work, I'm under."



### NO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Chaudet: There's no such thing as unemployment insurance. There weren't any of these things. My dad was sick for years with lead poisoning and he had his leg amputated. The Chaudets lived without one paycheck ever coming into our house. There was no such thing as workman's compensation. We lived because the printers at the Oakland Tribune would post a notice on the board, "Jules Chaudet is still at the University of California hospital at the Affiliated Colleges in San Francisco and he still has his family." The printers would chip in and the Masonic Lodge would chip in.

Jones: That's a very graphic explanation of why you were union-minded.

Chaudet: Well, Frank, that is part of it. But this is what was beating us in the early days -- fear. Fear that the man would lose his job. And see, this is what the Wagner Act did. The Wagner Act gave them the right to organize, which is something that we never had before, the right to organize. And I think that this is what thwarted the people in the early days.

We had a business agent here in town. He used to get paid so much a shift by the people. He didn't get a salary. He rode a bicycle around town. He didn't get a salary. If a man worked, 25¢. This was his salary. So if ten people worked, he got \$2.50 for the day.

Jones: What did he do to earn it?

Chaudet: He was their business agent. He'd patrol the jobs. The union shops he'd patrol to see that the contract was being lived up to and this was being done and he'd negotiate the contracts and also try to organize. But this was the great thing. And here we are in a Depression. Everybody's out of work. Breadlines. Soup kitchens in San Francisco -- the White Angel on the Embarcadero, do you remember that?

Jones: No. I wasn't in San Francisco.

Chaudet: Okay. The White Angel, the soup kitchen over there in San Francisco. Hundreds and hundreds of



Chaudet: thousands of workers out of work. And a man's going to organize when the boss comes on out and says, "Anybody seen talking to a union representative is immediately fired?"

Jones: What occupation was that?

Chaudet: All of them. All of them, with the exception of the trades that were strong.

Jones: Like the carpenters?

Chaudet: But the carpenters and all the building trades were having problems in those days because of the fact that under the "American Plan" a contractor couldn't get money from a bank or couldn't get supplies because of the fact that they had this ratio. I don't know what the ratio was, but they had a ratio of so many non-union members and so many union members.

Jones: I imagine San Francisco was somewhat of an exception, wasn't it?

Chaudet: San Francisco was above the average. Of course you know the bloody history of San Francisco -- Mike Casey in the Teamsters' in 1907 and along through there, you know -- and up through time San Francisco had a reputation as a good, militant, tough town.

Jones: Well, that's what I gather from history. Just to indicate the growth of unionism and organized labor in this county, what was the circulation of the East Bay Labor Journal? You said it was founded in what year, 1926?

Chaudet: 1926. I'd say about two or three thousand.

Jones: What was the county population then?

Chaudet: Oh, I haven't the remotest idea.

Jones: Well, then you went from a circulation of 2,000 roughly forty years ago to, what is it today?

Chaudet: About 40,000.

Jones: Oh, well that ought to be indicative . . .





### UNION NEWSPAPERS

Chaudet: About 40,000. And, of course, things are a lot different today, Frank, than they were then, because of the fact that they only had one labor paper. Now the Teamsters have their own paper. A lot of their unions have their own paper. This is just the general paper for the building trades and the Central Labor Council. But the Teamster paper in San Francisco, which covers Alameda County, I think that they must have at least 25 or 30 or 35 thousand circulation here in Alameda County.

Jones: It's phenomenal. I think it's 100,000 or more than that.

Chaudet: Out of the District Council in San Francisco?

Jones: It's something like that.

Chaudet: Yes. I was going to say that they must have between 25 and 40 thousand here in Alameda County. So if you take that and then you take the Building Service Employees that have a paper that comes up here, you'll find out that you're getting up fairly close to 100,000.

Jones: Yes, I don't think there's any doubt of that. It certainly shows growth. These harrassments, they must have been the contractors, or as you call them the employers depending on the nature of the business.

Jon                   Where else did you run into trouble? Did the county officials, city officials, give you trouble?

Chaudet: State, city, and county. You didn't have a friend. Well, you had quasi-friends, you know, but you didn't have any legislation, Frank, at any time, to benefit and to help the working people. There was no such thing as a beneficial law introduced by a supervisor or a city councilman. Yes, we had a few in the State Legislature, but all it was was 'Forget it.' Put it in and the bill was killed. It would be tied up in committee by the reactionary people from southern California and by the reactionary people that were in control of the state of California. They'd bottle up the stuff they didn't want. And look,



Chaudet: workmen's compensation, all of this, man, in those days it was virtually a pipe dream compared to what we have now.

So from the top, from the very top, and you gave a very good example -- Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover,-- that thinking, people that were dragged kicking and screaming into the 15th Century, believe me, relative to what America's all about and relative to the dignity of an individual and the dignity of man. They had no more conception of this than the man in the moon. And this permeated, in most states, from the top right straight on down through all levels of government.

Jones: I suppose that accounts for the fact that, after the long years of F.D.R., it looked like the Republicans would never get back into office. Successful labor legislation must have been a basis for that extreme popularity of Roosevelt.

Chaudet: It was that. Look what we came out with. Just one thing. Social Security. Just one thing: Social Security -- F.D.R.

Jones: That's right. That hit everybody.

Chaudet: The economy today -- this has saved the economy, social security. I don't think we'll ever have a deep, dark, bad Depression like we had in the Thirties, because of the fact that you've got that. But one thing, see, will make F.D.R. live forever in the minds of people -- social security. One thing L.B.J. will live for, Lyndon B. Johnson, and should forever in the minds of people -- medicare.

Jones: We've pretty well outlined the hindrances and annoyances and the absolute blockage of the furtherance of the union movement. Now I would ask you, well, what solved the problem? It isn't completely solved, but certainly the numbers have increased so much that labor is so much better off today. What happened here particularly in Alameda County? Was it federal legislation even here or did you do any big drive?

Chaudet: Well, Frank, this is just my opinion, but I think that the one thing that gave the labor movement the impetus to organize was those miserable



Chaudet: years under that Republican Depression where men were degraded, where you saw doctors and other people in soup lines, men selling apples on a street corner. Despair caught ahold of them and then after despair it was, "Well, by gosh, I'm going to do something about it."

With the passage of the Wagner Act, the right to organize, the men turned to the labor movement, not their salvation, but as one way to get back for the years, not necessarily all of the years, but "I've got an opportunity now to make up some lost ground. If I have to join a union, in joining this union I've got this opportunity to kind of get back to what I lost during those years where I didn't have a job or I didn't do this, didn't do that." And I think this is what gave the impetus.

If you read the history of the growth of the C.I.O., the formation of the C.I.O., and John L. Lewis, these men who were working in this tire factory in Akron, Ohio, and Chevrolet Plant #5 in Flint, Michigan, or with the Reuther brothers, with the great things that John L. Lewis did in the mines -- "the President wants you to organize." But when the assembly lines in the automobile factories where they were paid piece work, and as the people improved they'd boost the quota up and everything. I forget what story it was. It could have been the story of John L. Lewis, but one of the stories that I read. It could have been Louis Adamic's Dynamite, the story of the class struggle in the United States, the history of the labor movement. It could have been one of our good A.F. of L. publications. But a man walking over in the sit-down days and pulling the main switch and all of the damn whirring that he'd heard night in and night out, day in and day out, all of a sudden stopped during those sit-down strikes. And as one man said to the other, "By God, it's like the world has come to an end."

#### LASHING BACK

Chaudet: That was it. And this was lashing back. This was the dignity of an individual asserting himself through his union. And I think this is what gave the impetus to the great growth that we had in



Chaudet: the Thirties and the formation of the C.I.O., the building of the A.F.L. and all of this. It was, oh, I don't know, the old college spirit, college try, call it what you want, but it was, "I'm a man again."

Jones: An independence.

Chaudet: Right.

Jones: We got a little ahead of our game here, I think. We got into the Thirties. When was the Wagner Act? 1936?

Chaudet: I think that was passed in '35, along in there.

Jones: Well, I wanted to get back a bit to this situation in Alameda County. You have touched on what I had in mind when you were talking about the officials with more or less of an apathetic attitude. There'd be a couple of pro-labor bills introduced in Sacramento just to keep the local boys happy.

Chaudet: To keep the peasants happy.

Jones: Right.

Chaudet: The natives are getting restless.

Jones: Do you know any officials here specifically who were that way, anti-labor, or were they just generally that way? Because what I wanted to lead up to is what Mr. Warren's attitude was at that time.

Chaudet: Let me explain in this way. They weren't anti-labor. Labor was nothing, so they didn't give a damn, Frank. See, this was the feeling.

#### NO LABOR VOTE

Chaudet: There was nobody that could deliver a so-called labor vote. You had a heterogeneous collection of unions here. There was no COPE [Council of Political Education] as we know it today, no precinct organization as we know it today, no donating of money, no putting on of picnics or anything else. The labor movement, well, it was





Chaudet: there, but why pay attention to it? It's not going to annoy us. It won't bother us. They have no organized strength as such.

In those days, politics was built -- and it still is to a great extent -- on lodges, your friends, and word of mouth that was spread by your friends. "Charlie is a good guy. Give him a vote at election time." What was the labor movement? No organization. Yes, they'd get down and they'd talk. They'd talk at union meetings and everything else, but they didn't have the drive, they didn't have the get up and go to get on out and campaign. Sure, they'd endorse somebody, but what did it mean? Or they wouldn't.

Jones: An endorsement without anything to back it up wasn't enough.

Chaudet: That's right. All it was was word of mouth among their own people, and they didn't have the numerical strength to do anything.

Jones: But I imagine, your father would be working as a labor official in favor of the candidacy of Mr. Warren, say, even in the Coolidge period, '26, when Mr. Warren was first elected. I imagine it was still welcome even if the labor movement wasn't too numerically strong.

Chaudet: Oh yes, it was welcomed. The thing was that, naturally, every politician, and we've seen this in recent years, "I don't care where the votes come from as long as I get the votes."

Jones: Right.

Chaudet: And look, they haven't changed down through a period of time, believe me, Frank. It's no different now. We had a candidate for Congress here who went over to what we would call some of the left-wing and says, "Oh, I want their votes." We said, "Well, if you get their votes, we don't don't think you're going to get our votes." "Oh, well, I need it. I'm not going to ask what a man's thinking is about this particular thing. I need his votes." And this is a man that was endorsed by the labor movement. It hasn't changed any from the days in the early twenties or in the days before that. It was a question of -- they never looked, you know: they never lifted up the



Chaudet: corner of the rug to find out what's underneath. All they want is that vote. All they want is that X after their name come November or June or whenever the primary and the general elections are.

### MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

Chaudet: And this structure here, Frank, I just might throw this in: Alameda County, with the exception of maybe some of the rock-ribbed Republican counties in upstate New York, has been the epitome of playing everything close to your vest. "Leave us not disturb the status quo." And I think down through time a lot of the residents became immunized. You know. They just picked this up and it was part and parcel of their system. And not only the labor movement and my dad, God rest his soul, and all of the other people, but it was just a question: They are here. The labor movement is here. We're not going to do anything to go on out and really hurt them, but we're not going to do anything to help them." And so here it was, "Maintain the status quo. Don't disturb it. Leave things as they are." And I think that that was the theory.

Jones: Was there any labor shortage, say, in the middle twenties when certainly I don't know whether the figures have ever been surpassed in the number of homes built nationally? It's surprising but I remember reading that somewhere. You know there was a great building boom all around.

Chaudet: Yes, that followed World War I. It was after that, but I think that this was just a question of -- look, figure out, after every war, figure out 1918, 1919. You always have an upsurge and a great outbreak of births during and after a war.

Jones: Oh yes, right. We're getting into the economics, but what I was thinking about was more simple. The homes were built and the buildings were built. Half of San Francisco was built, you know, in a decade.

Chaudet: Yes. That was to take care of the babies that were the outcome of World War I that were growing up.



Jones: All right. Fine. But where did the workers come from? You say they wanted to keep the status quo. They must have come in from outside the state.

Chaudet: Oh no, we've always had them. The workers have always been here, but the thing is that they have floated over a period of time from here to here, where a carpenter could be a painter one day, a bricklayer the next day, because they were men of varied crafts. And when the building boom was on for carpenters, they were carpenters. And then when the building boom came along for bricklayers, they became bricklayers, because in those days a craftsman was a craftsman, believe me. This is just my theory. This is Chaudet expounding his theory.

Jones: I wanted to ask you, what year did your father pass away?

Chaudet: 1935. He died at an International Typographical Union convention in Montreal, Canada. He was a delegate. And in 1936, one year and seven days later, my mother died at the International Typographical Union convention in Colorado Springs.

Jones: It must really get in the blood, all right. Now, when he was working for Warren . . .

Chaudet: He didn't work for Warren.

Jones: Well, what did he do for him?

### ELECTIONEERING

Chaudet: Oh, just electioneered. The same way he did for Ezra Decoto, the same way he did for Jimmy Quinn, who was a member of the Steamfitters' Union and ran for City Council. He'd get out among the neighbors. He did in those days what COPE does now: push doorbells, talk to people, pass out election cards. They had what they called the old Fitchburg Social and Improvement Club. And they'd have a candidates' night.

Jones: This was the subdivision or the separate town?

Chaudet: Yes. This was Fitchburg's. The old Fitchburg Social and Improvement Club. We had a fellow out



Chaudet: there by the name of Harry Boyle, an Irish politician. He was on the Board of Education. He dropped dead at one of the meetings here. He got a little excited and dropped dead at one of their meetings. But this was the old line politics, where they'd have, not necessarily Earl Warren, but Charlie Heyer, the supervisor. We had a fellow, Charlie Blagborne, that ran for constable. They'd come on out and they'd spend a Sunday walking over the neighborhood and introducing them to everybody and saying, "This is my friend." It might be the Fernandez, it might be the Ivaldis; it might be the Whites; it might be the Parrishes. But, "Here is my friend, Earl Warren, the district Attorney of Alameda County. I hope that you'll be able to see your way clear to vote for Earl come next Tuesday." And this was it.

Jones: Did he single out Mr. Warren for any special consideration?

Chaudet: Oh no. It wasn't Earl Warren any more than it was Ezra Decoto or any more than it was Jimmy Quinn or Charlie Heyer or anybody that Dad felt was doing a good job.

Jones: Did your dad, who didn't die until many, many years later, did he ever have any thought that Mr. Warren would go on and rise so high as he did?

Chaudet: Oh, he knew it.

Jones: How did he know it?

#### STATE-WIDE EXPOSURE

Chaudet: Well, now, in 1933 -- I think it was in 1933, and I could be wrong, Frank -- they moved Earl Warren in as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge in the state of California to give him state-wide exposure. He was the district attorney of Alameda County at that time. He was not in the state lineup of the grand lodge of Masonry in California. Now a lot of people are liable to contradict me on this, see, but it so happens that I think that I know what the story was. And so they decided that they would give Earl Warren the exposure of a state-wide organization. What better? What better organization? Because they alternated each year between the south and the north for Grand





Chaudet: Master of California. What better way to expose a man? The Blue Lodge and public schools week, and laying of cornerstones. Here you have a very distinguished-looking dude from Alameda County who had just successfully prosecuted two people in a shipboard murder, who had had this wonderful statewide publicity, and also he had prosecuted and sent to jail some city officials of the city of Oakland in a paving scandal along about that time.

Jones: What was that all about?

Chaudet: Well, I'm a little hazy about that, but I do know, oh, he prosecuted the sheriff, too, of Alameda County, Burton Becker, and he sent to San Quentin a city commissioner. This is what brought in the form of a city management that we have here in Oakland at the present time. Before, they had a commissioner form of government. And Warren, as district attorney, prosecuted. You had Burton Becker, who was the sheriff of Alameda County, and I think it was hanky panky with the gin mills in the bootlegging days. And he had sent Becker over to San Quentin. So here was Earl Warren, the knight in shining armor.

Jones: Even from his very early days he adhered very firmly to the law as far as I can gather.

Chaudet: Always, always, yes. With one exception, I was told.

Jones: What was that?

Chaudet: A man by the name of Charles Real -- and Charles is dead now -- who was the head of the Teamster Union. During a labor strife here a taxicab went off one of the bridges here with a non-union taxicab man, a non-union driver, when the Teamsters were trying to organize. And Mr. Real was indicted. And Mr. Warren was the D.A. I believe Mr. Real never came to trial. I'm a little hazy on this, as I was working in San Francisco, but I do know it was common gossip in labor and from then on Mr. Real was firmly in the pockets of the Republican Party in power in Alameda County, even to the extent that when his own union endorsed Harry Truman for president Mr. Real enthusiastically embraced Thomas E. Dewey.



Jones: It must have been a firm commitment.

Chaudet: I think that it was very firm. This, Frank, you can check with Mr. Ash, Bob Ash, at a later date, and I believe that Bob remembers this. But anyway, that was it. And as I say, I don't say that this was the only time in the history of the chief justice that he didn't observe the law, but as I say, here was the knight in shining armor from Alameda County, backed by the Knowlands with their powerful paper and their connections in southern California. How do you expose a man to all of the people of California? Publicity had been good. So they made him master of the grand lodge of Masonry of California. And he traveled for a year. And he was at the dedications in southern California and he was at the public schools and he was getting into the lodges and shaking the hands of his good brothers. A beautiful lash up. At what charge? Did the Republican party pay for it? No way.

Jones: Oh, I see. That was quite an advantage.

Chaudet: Well certainly it was an advantage.

Jones: How many Masons are there in the state?

Chaudet: I don't know.

Jones: Certainly several hundred thousand.

Chaudet: But this was how Earl got his state-wide exposure. Then, let's see, he came along and it was after that that he ran for attorney general. I don't remember the year he ran for attorney general, but I think he'd served at least eight years and then he ran against Olson in '42, and he ran against Kenny in '44.

Jones: He served as California Attorney General from '39 to '42, so he must have run in '38.

Chaudet: So, as I say, here it was. This was setting the groundwork for the emergence of Earl Warren as a state-wide candidate, and you couldn't beat it.

Jones: Yes, that certainly couldn't be beaten, as you say, even financially. He didn't have to pay.



Chaudet: For exposure, state-wide exposure.

Jones: You mentioned this King, Conner, Ramsay case, also called the Point Lobos case. I don't think we need to go into it, it's been so well documented.

Chaudet: It has been well documented, and if you're going to talk to other labor people, there are many people, Frank, that know much more about it than I do, especially those people of the longshoremen, the I.L.W.U.

Jones: I think you told me on the telephone that you knew one of them.

Chaudet: Red Ramsay.

Jones: Red Ramsay of the King, Conner, and Ramsay case. And then I asked Sid Roger of the Dispatcher if Mr. Ramsay were still alive, and he said that as far as he knew that he was alive and was living in the East. Do you have any knowledge of that?

Chaudet: I haven't the remotest idea. The way that I knew Red Ramsay, Frank, was that he was from out in our neighborhood, and he used to caddy at the same golf club that I did, Sequoia Country Club. And that's how I got to know Red Ramsay.

Jones: He grew up right in the neighborhood, then?

Chaudet: He was out there. I think he was from Elmhurst, which was just past Fitchburg, which was Ninietth to Ninety-eighth Avenue or Ninetieth to One Hundredth Avenue.

Jones: Oh. And then he also went into the labor movement.

Chaudet: He went into the labor movement, yes.

Jones: Marine firemen.

Chaudet: Yes. And then we also had several others that went into the labor movement from there. Harry Whiteside was from Seventy-eighth Avenue.

Jones: Who's Harry Whiteside?

Chaudet: He used to be with U.A.W., the United Auto Workers. He dropped dead up in Los Vegas. Manual



- Chaudet: Dias, vice president of the state A.F.L.-C.I.O. -- Manny and I went to school together at Lockwood. So did Harry Whiteside. We went to school together at Lockwood. And they all went up in the labor movement. Harry was an international representative of United Auto Workers, and Manny was also in the United Auto Workers and vice president now and one of Tommy Pitts' right-hand men in the State Fed. [State Federation of Labor]
- Jones: Did you ever talk to Ramsay about this case?
- Chaudet: No. As I say, I've got my own opinions, but nevertheless, no. By the time we had caddied and Red had gone his way, I'd gone my own way in the A.F. of L.. He was in the C.I.O. There were no lines of communication.
- Jones: Did labor generally hold these convictions in '36 that this killing was a reflection on organized labor or did they split on the issue of Communism?
- Chaudet: No, Frank, as far as I can see. I was in San Francisco and this was an Oakland deal. It did generate an awful lot of interest. But there was a great deal of the labor movement that felt that Ramsay was framed.
- Jones: Yes. I think that's been brought out in many separate articles.
- Chaudet: And the thing was that there was nothing against Ramsay about it because of the fact that they thought -- well, let me put it this way, a lot of people thought -- that Communism, no. I don't think that that was the question at all. I think it was a question of the -- look, we were still in the Depression. We were still in the Depression!
- Jones: Sure, in '36, yes.
- Chaudet: We were in the Depression and this was a man trying to right an injustice, see.
- Jones: All right. Getting back again, did you have any personal contact with Mr. Warren as a youth, I mean aside from seeing him in your home?
- Chaudet: No. This was my only contact with him. As a





- Chaudet: youth I never had anything to talk to him about or anything.
- Jones: Suppose in 1948, when he ran for Vice President and was beaten, he had just retired and you had never heard of him again. Would you still have memories of him?
- Chaudet: Oh yes. Earl Warren is a very distinguished individual. I mean his manner and everything about him. Some people say he's a cold-blooded fish. I never found him that way.
- Jones: Why didn't you? I'm working up to your contact with him when you met him, visited with him in Washington.
- Chaudet: Well, possibly Frank, it's because I'm gregarious and outgoing and a little ebullient, and possibly this reflects in him, but to me he was always very, very friendly and kind of a warm individual.
- Jones: What I was getting at was actually what contact did you have with him? You didn't as a youth, and naturally that's understandable because of the disparity in ages. Perhaps in your work. Let's get you as postmaster or something.

#### WARREN VERSUS OLSON, KENNY

- Chaudet: Well, postmaster was '53. Let's go back to 1940, when he first ran for Governor. He ran against Olson. The labor movement supported Olson. And he beat Olson for governor.
- Jones: Pardon me. It was '42, because Olson pardoned the Point Lobos man in '41.
- Chaudet: Frank, I have my dates wrong. I'm thinking of the presidential election. In '42 he beat Olson. In '46 he beat Bob Kenny. In '50 he beat Jimmy Roosevelt.
- Jones: Right.
- Chaudet: All right. Now, in '42 the labor movement was for Olson because Olson had pardoned Mooney. Olson had done some fine things as far as the labor movement was concerned for liberal legislation. The first Democratic governor we'd had in God



Chaudet: knows when.

Jones: This century, as I recall.

Chaudet: Was that it? Could be, could be. But Olson was a fine individual as far as the labor movement was concerned, and he did his very best under trying circumstances. So along came Warren with his great powerful Republican machine -- the Chandlers, the Knowlands, and everybody up and down the state boosting Earl Warren -- so he beat Culbert in '42.

In 1946, along came Bob Kenny. The A.F. of L. was split very badly on Bob Kenny. It was Bob Kenny's association with some of the people that the A.F. of L. had been fighting, the C.I.O., down through years. And in 1946 the state labor movement endorsed Earl Warren. This was four years after they had come out for Olson. This is when I got to know Earl Warren better because of the fact that Bob Ash and myself from Alameda County and Neil Haggerty, who was the secretary of the State Federation of Labor, made a tour through California enlisting support for Earl Warren. And it was in 1946 that Bob Ash and several others in Alameda County endorsed Earl Warren here. The Alameda County Central Labor Council endorsed Earl Warren for governor following the lead of the State Federation of Labor. So it was then, during that campaign, that I ran across the governor on several occasions, and this is when I got to know Governor Warren better, which was cemented a little further when I was postmaster of Oakland, because he came to Oakland on several occasions. The postmaster is usually invited to the dedication of libraries -- the Oakland Library I think was dedicated there -- several other civic functions when the governor would be here.

Jones: How long were you postmaster?

Chaudet: About three years, under President Harry S. Truman.

Jones: Well then you did have occasion to meet with Warren? I haven't asked you, but I presume you're a Democrat.



WARREN VERSUS ROOSEVELT

Chaudet: A solid one. The only time I ever got off the reservation was for Earl Warren and for Jimmy Quinn. And I got off once. I want to tell you now. In 1950 the labor movement endorsed Roosevelt. By that time, between Earl Warren and the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the honeymoon was over, and Neil Haggerty had come out, because of the fact that Earl Warren had vetoed a vital piece of legislation, and ran a box that's in the East Bay Labor Journal, and we ran it for weeks, to the effect that Earl Warren as governor of California was no longer to be considered a friend of organized labor. This is how quick things change: '42 Olson over Warren; '46, Warren over Kenny; '50, Roosevelt over Warren, and in '51 Warren was not to be considered a friend of the organized labor movement because of the fact that he had vetoed a bill. Neil Haggerty claimed that he had doublecrossed him on this bill. Warren had vetoed and the veto was sustained.

Jones: It certainly is a fluctuating situation. From enthusiasm to extreme lack of it.

Chaudet: Yes. From riding the bandwagon to the dirty dog.

Jones: You were postmaster then in the early fifties and that's when you had a chance to talk to Warren. Using the old general theory that a Democrat is liberal and a Republican isn't, which is a pretty bad misnomer, but anyway just for talking's sake, what was your impression of Mr. Warren if you had a chance to talk politics to him? Did he give any indication that at some future date he would go into a blaze of liberality, like on these various court decisions? Like the school desegregation Brown case, for example?

Chaudet: May I put it this way, Frank. Earl Warren, to me, was one of the most astute politicians, along with Jimmy Rolph, that California had ever had. May I say that Earl could put his ear to the ground and hear the beating of the tom-toms. Inherently, I don't know, but I think that this man senses the way that people are going to move, and he moves with them or ahead of them.

Jones: But isn't there another factor in being a jurist as compared to a politician? A jurist would have



- Jones: to depend on the interpretation of the Constitution that doesn't shift, and as a politician you could go any way you wanted to. You don't mean he was insincere. That's a bad word.
- Chaudet: No, no. I'd never make that charge against Earl Warren.
- Jones: But you indicated he was trying to lead the people, or do you think he thought it was constitutionally valid?
- Chaudet: Well, no. I think that he felt that we were moving -- the liberals were coming in -- and that it was constitutionally valid for him to interpret the Constitution liberally.
- Jones: How do you mean the liberals were coming in? Because Mr. Eisenhower was in in '54?

#### ASTUTE POLITICIAN

- Chaudet: He was in and appointed Warren. But can I put it this way? I think Earl Warren has a great sense of history, a great sense of history. Now look, I want to give you an example of an astute politician. I'm going down to Santa Cruz one Sunday morning. We went down through Santa Clara. This was fairly early in the morning, eight or nine o'clock. We went down through Santa Clara, and you go over some road and you pass right by the train station at Santa Clara, the S.P. depot right there. There's a cannery on one side and everything else. Gee, we see this big crowd. What's doing over there?

So we pull on up, get out of the car and walk on over, and who was standing out on the platform with a beautiful white mane of hair, bowing to everybody, welcoming the Santa Clara football team back from winning the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans? Here is Santa Clara, 99% Portuguese, 99% Catholic. Here is a past potentate of the Shrine. Look, by showing up he locked up every Catholic vote there for time immemorial. Now this is what I mean. I don't mean to say the chief justice -- as governor and as district attorney had an extra-perceptory sense of politics. He knew what to do at a given time and what to do at a right time.





Jones: Would you say he was as hard a campaigner as Goody Knight?

Chaudet: No way.

Jones: Knight was supposed to be the toughest man to ever beat, because he'd go to any meeting of any size. Mr. Warren didn't campaign that hard?

Chaudet: He didn't have to. You see, Knight had to get on out and do that because he's bouncy. The dignity of Earl Warren, with a beautiful mane of hair, walking like this, bowing to the left and bowing to the right, the governor of the state of California and attorney general of the state of California, all of this.

But you see, this is what I mean. Political timing. Santa Clara. Who's going to go out in the early morning to welcome the Santa Clara football team back from the Sugar Bowl? It was an upset victory. They won, see. But every football buff in all of northern California -- "God bless the governor of California." See, this was the first big one that we'd had. Or, may I say, from a Catholic college, one of the great big victories. And everybody said, "Well, gee, this man must be great."

Jones: He didn't even go to Santa Clara.

Chaudet: He graduated from Cal.

Jones: He went at the right time, though. We have just a few minutes left, Joe. Could we just briefly go into your visit with Mr. Warren? Was it last year?

Chaudet: No, about three years ago.

Jones: That would make it 1966, in the summertime?

Chaudet: Early spring. I was president of the Oakland port commission at the time. We went back for a port meeting, and also we were developing this program after Dunsmuir House, the poverty program here, developing this, trying to get money from the government for building a World air hanger out at the airport, the new Seventh Street terminal down there that's now functioning as the largest containerized port in all of the United States,



Chaudet: the second largest in the world.

Jones: And these are all commission activities?

Chaudet: All commission activities. And when we were there, I was at Congressman Cohelan's office and also was with Congressman Miller. I think that it was Congressman Cohelan picked up the phone and called over and said that there was somebody that he knew that the chief justice would like to see from Alameda County and that he knew that he'd recognize the name, that Joe Chaudet was there with the contingent from the port of Oakland and would like to see him.

So, as I say, we spent about between half and hour and forty-five minutes with him in his offices at the Supreme Court building.

Jones: Did you reminisce about the old days?

#### HOW ARE THINGS?

Chaudet: About Oakland. He knew what was going on in the port of Oakland, and also asked about members of my family. He had met Mrs. Chaudet. Mrs. Rooney, the wife of the legal counsel of the port was along as well as Wally Abernathy. He asked what we were doing back there, wanted to know about individuals who had been on the port when he was district attorney of Alameda County, what happened to them. It was more of a good, friendly chat. How are things going in Alameda County? How's the port doing? And he also knew of what the port was doing, our industrial park, the coliseum complex. Oh, incidentally, he was very interested in our airport, because, you know, we were being laughed at and hooted at for opening the airport. (He was at the dedication of the Oakland airport, and I had a chance to chat with him that day, when we dedicated, and that was along about '63.) So he asked us how traffic was at the Oakland airport, the plans that we had for our outer harbor terminal, and he was very well versed on what was going on in Alameda County.

Jones: Would you say he's possessed of an extraordinary memory?

Chaudet: Extraordinary; yes.. Very much so.



Jones: How did he react to meeting you after the years? Did he say anything about his victories or his political fights?

Chaudet: No, we just chatted. And I told him that as one individual that I was awful happy to see the very liberal stand that he had been taking and that in my opinion that he was going to live as one of the great chief justices of all times.

Jones: How did he react to that?

Chaudet: That very, very sweet smile that he has. He smiled and says, "Well, thank you very much, Joe. That makes a fellow Alameda Countian feel very, very proud." And I said, "Yes. I think that you'll be up there with the other greats, with Brandeis and the other great chief justices," because in my opinion he's done a terrific job as the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Jones: It's hard to imagine how things were prior to that court period. I still think that Chronicle editorial about "he's done more than the whole court did in all times previous" might be exaggerated.

Unless you have something you want to add, Joe, I think that that should wind us up. It's getting pretty late here.

Chaudet: Why, that's about all, Frank. As I say, down through the time, the associations I've had with him . . .

#### REFLECTIONS ON '48

Chaudet: I just want to add this as an aside. I think that in 1948, if they hadn't had the little man on the wedding cake running for president -- somebody by the name of Dewey -- and it had been reversed, that Warren would have been elected president. This is my honest opinion and the opinion of many people in the labor movement, because Earl Warren had a happy faculty of splitting up his opposition. And if he had run, I am sure that he might not have gotten a 100 per cent support out of the American Federation of Labor, but he'd have gotten an awful lot of support. And as it was, the minute that Dewey was



Chaudet: nominated, the same way Nixon being nominated and Reagan being nominated, it throws the Democrats and the labor movement together. We beat Earl Warren here in Alameda County with Truman.

Jones: Is that so?

Chaudet: Yes. We beat Earl Warren here in Alameda County with Truman in 1948, which goes to show how history hangs on very little things. But this is an opinion that is held by many people in the labor movement -- that if the thing had been reversed, that if Earl Warren had headed the ticket, Earl could have beaten Harry Truman. But Dewey was made to order for Truman, just made to order. And what Earl Warren would have done would have been to split the labor movement and have a lot of people sit out the campaign. But as it was, we got the old convention fever. "Geez, we don't want that Dewey." And man, did we work! And this was it. Dewey drove the labor movement and the Democrats into each other's arms. We had to love each other, for that one campaign. See?

Jones: Like when labor gets together every once in a while 1000 per cent' when you have a right-to-work issue?

Chaudet: This is it, see? This is it.

Jones: That ought to do it, then, Joe, and thank you very much.

Chaudet: Thank you, Frank.





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Earl Warren Oral History Project

# A WAREHOUSEMAN'S REMINISCENCES

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Paul Heide



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Paul Heide: A WAREHOUSEMAN'S REMINISCENCES

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Paul Heide (born 1909) was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to document his role as an organizer of the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union and leader in the progressive forces of organized labor in California (1930-1970).

Interviewer: Frank N. Jones, who has extensive knowledge of labor history from his years with the state AFL-CIO, plus general acquaintance of public affairs from his wide journalistic experience. Research material developed by the Regional Oral History Office with guidance on general questions from principal investigators of the Earl Warren Project.

Conduct of the Interview: A single interview was conducted on May 21, 1969, in Mr. Heide's office in the architectural prize-winning headquarters of the ILWU at 99 Hegenberger Road, in sight and sound of Oakland Airport, a few miles south of the Oakland docks.

Editing: Editing of the transcribed taped interview was done by June Hogan in the Regional Oral History Office. The edited text was reviewed by Mr. Heide who made minor additional comments.

Narrative Account of Mr. Heide and Progress of the

Interview: Paul Heide has a vast knowledge of conditions in the Oakland area where his working lifetime was spent, aside from six years aboard oil tankers in his youth, after which he worked on the docks and helped organize the ILWU during the 1934 strike. He discusses the physical effort of "high-piling" 100-pound sugar sacks 10 high, at a wage one-tenth of today's, and the espionage activities of management's Industrial Association, touching on the complexities of later mechanization and modernization agreements.

He stresses the anti-union pattern of Alameda County governmental actions, aided by the Oakland Tribune, in dodging bringing pickets to trial



at a time when anti-picketing statutes had become unconstitutional due to a state supreme court victory.

A thoughtful, reflective man, Heide concedes that Earl Warren as governor had many friends in labor ranks, did not crusade against labor, and had a good law enforcement record. This he feels brought Warren many votes from both parties. He bases his opinions of Warren on knowledge of the 1936 King, Connor, Ramsay case, hundreds of labor conferences when Warren activities were discussed, and a personal encounter with Warren's deputies. "In those days, we considered him anti-labor but in retrospect many of us would have to revise our thinking." He makes the point that Warren's position on labor could be attributed to his close relationship with Joseph Knowland, then publisher of the Tribune.

He is of the opinion that Warren's major mistakes in judgement were not attempting to curtail internment of Japanese-Americans and serving on the Warren Commission to investigate John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Gabrielle Morris  
Regional Oral History Office



UNION BUSINESS AGENT

Jones: Mr. Heide, may I ask you about yourself and your career? How did you get into the labor movement?

Heide: Well, after my graduation from high school -- I graduated from Mount Diablo Union High School in Concord, California. And within a week or so after that, I secured a job aboard a Standard Oil tanker and the following six years I went to sea, up to and including the period of the 1934 maritime strike on the West Coast. During the period of the maritime strike on the West Coast, I was on a West Coast oil tanker that had left one month before the strike for New York and return. But when the strike developed we were sent to the shipyard at Chester, Pennsylvania, and then put on a delivery route from the Gulf Coast to the Atlantic Coast. And we continued on that run until the strike was approximately ended and then the ship was sent back to the West Coast. That was the last ship that I was on.

Jones: Just for a starter, could you tell us about your place of birth? Your birth, where, and schooling, father's name and main occupations, and all those sorts of things?

PARENTAGE

Heide: I was born in Oakland, California, August 26, 1909. My father was born in one of the small islands which comprise the country of Denmark and was raised in Copenhagen. He was born in 1867.

My mother was raised on the Crow Indian reservation in Nebraska, where my grandmother was a teacher. She spent her young life there and left at the age of fifteen to seek her fortune in the west, finally winding up in San Francisco, then in Oakland. She was sent from Oakland by an employment agency to fill a job as a waitress in a restaurant that was owned by my father at that time.

My father was originally a journeyman machinist. He had been apprenticed first as a blacksmith but did not complete the apprenticeship but did later complete apprenticeship as a journeyman machinist.

Jones: Was that in Denmark?





Heide: In Denmark. He subsequently went to sea for a short period of time, he and his brother. They went to Argentina, near Buenos Aires, where he worked as a fireman on the railroad and my uncle, Andrew, his brother, worked in the roundhouse as a mechanic.

Jones: What was your father's name?

Heide: My father's name was Emil Anton Heide.

Jones: What was your mother's maiden name?

Heide: My mother's maiden name was Gertrude Maude Mart.

Jones: When did your father come here from South America?

Heide: Well, he wanted to go to Rio de Janeiro and accepted a job on a ship that was supposed to be scheduled to go there. However, instead of going there, it wound up on the banks of Newfoundland, where the skipper and the first mate were arrested for smuggling and the ship was held by the authorities for some six months.

He returned to Denmark, paying his fare back to Denmark, and subsequently entered this country under the quota for immigrants and became a citizen of this country.

Jones: What year was that?

Heide: This would have been somewhere around 1886 or 1887. In 1887, by that time he was working at the old Riston Iron Works in San Francisco as a journeyman machinist. The young apprentice who worked for him was a lad by the name of Jim Moore. Today his name might be better recognized by local area residents as the owner of Moore Shipyard.

Jones: Your mother went to this restaurant that your father eventually was running, right?

Heide: Yes. He used to help my grandfather in Copenhagen. He ran a bakery there. He learned, by helping his father, to bake all of the Danish pastries, breads, and other items the usual bakery produces.

He also helped his mother in the kitchen, where he learned a great deal about cooking. So, between the two, he became a full fledged baker, cake decorator, and cook.



Heide: So, when he had accumulated some money -- he was at that time living in Oakland, having moved from San Francisco and working on some job in Oakland -- he bought a small restaurant in the city of Berkeley.

Jones: Do you know the address?

Heide: Well, it was just a couple of doors from Addison and Shattuck.

Jones: What year did your parents get married?

Heide: My parents were married in 1905.

Jones: I was going to ask you if there are any more labor people in your family? Then I wanted to ask you specifically about Raymond David Heide, the vice-president of Local 6 whose plaque is in the foyer showing he was born in 1913 and died in 1948 and he was the vice-president. What relation is he to you?

Heide: He was my youngest brother. The youngest of the five children in our family.

Jones: Was there anything you'd care to say about him that is relevant to this?

Heide: Well, he was one of the pioneers of this union. He worked very hard. He and I always worked closely.

Jones: What about your other brothers and sisters?

Heide: Well, my oldest brother was my brother Walter, who is a twin with my oldest sister. My sister's name is Evelyn. My brother Walter is presently retired under the longshoreman's disability retirement program. My sister is a receptionist at the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Oakland. I have another brother who lives in Fullerton in Orange County and is a manager of the main plant of Moore Business Forms, in Los Angeles city.

Jones: What year were you graduated from high school?

Heide: I graduated in 1928. I should have graduated in 1927, but because of illness, I had to stay out for three months of one year. Then I took the whole year over again.

Jones: What year did you begin working?



Heide: I shipped out for the first time shortly after I graduated in 1928. I continued to ship until August of 1934.

# DOCK WORK

Jones: That's quite a potent year in your work, I gather. Is that the year that you started working on the docks?

Heide: Yes. On my return home, I, of course, was looking for employment, and my brother had been working at the Haslett Warehouse Company in Oakland at the foot of Webster Street. I went down to the warehouse with him. In those days the warehousemen shaped up just as the longshoremen had prior to the 1934 strike and managed to eke out a couple of days work a week.

Jones: Now that you are on the subject could you tell us about conditions for the working man then? What would an average weekly wage be and how many hours did you work?

Heide: We didn't have much of anything. The wage that I received working for Haslett was \$3.50 a day for an eight hour day. You did very heavy work. My brother and I, because we were both over six foot -- I'm six foot four and one-half, my brother was six foot three -- were given jobs as high pilers and that fall and winter we high-piled some 170,000 sacks of sugar. They were hundred pound sacks.

Jones: Is "high-piled" just what it sounds like?

Heide: Yes, we piled them high. If they went up the elevator to the second floor, we piled them ten high. On the main floor, we piled them forty high. Of course, on the main floor, we used a conveyer. But we had to build a block first to hold the pile. If you don't secure a block properly, the whole pile will slide down.

Jones: These conditions must be some of the reasons why you guys thought the union was necessary. Was there any effective type of union for maritime workers prior to 1934 and the beginning of the ILWU?

Heide: No, there wasn't, really, insofar as the seafaring crafts were concerned or the longshoremen, the terminal workers.



Jones: Was there one overall employers' association then?

### THE INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION

Heide: No, there wasn't one overall employers' association, unless you could consider such groups as the San Francisco Industrial Association as an overall association. That was one overall association. During the periods that followed of actually organizing, the Industrial Association set up industry groupings, such as the Wholesale Grocers' Warehouse Association, and the Flour, Feed and Cereal Association, etc.

Jones: By the different industries.

Heide: Right. They were all affiliated with the Industrial Association. That Industrial Association, of course, fought labor very vigorously. It was strongly opposed to labor's right to organize. They used labor spies and employed any tactics that they could to prevent organization or stop the men from getting a decent wage and a decent living.

Jones: Can you give an example of such discrimination or whatever word you care to use?

Heide: Sure. One of the business agents of our union was a man by the name of Charles Tarling. It so happened that the report of an operative to the Industrial Association went astray to a wrong address and was turned over to us. In this letter was a report, a complete report, of all organizing activities within our union. This kind of a report could have only been made by one man, i.e., Charles Tarling. Although this was circumstantial and we couldn't prove it, he was aware, I'm sure, that we intercepted the letter, the report. This letter was going to Charles Boynton, the secretary of the Industrial Association. So, he quit his job, and shortly thereafter, he moved to Canada. We later were advised that he was a Pinkerton agent. The LaFollette Committee reported that the plant where he had originally worked had planted two -- this was Western Sugar Company -- labor spies within our union.

Subsequently, Tarling went insane and was confined to an asylum and subsequently died.

Jones: What's an average ILWU wage now?





Heide: Well, when you say the ILWU, you have to take into account the categories of work that fall under the jurisdiction of the ILWU. It all depends what a man does. The longshoremen who work on the docks and terminals have a coast-wide contract with Pacific Maritime Association.

Jones: That's the famous "M and M."

Heide: Yes, the mechanization-modernization agreement is part of the coast-wide agreement.

Jones: Well, yes, I know it's a very complex matter.

Heide: I just wanted to distinguish this local union from the longshoremen. This is the warehouse union. Actually the full name is Warehouse Processing and Allied Workers Union. We represent many categories of work within this geographical area.

Jones: Right. Then for the sake of simplicity, let's say that there is a young fellow who is working as a warehouseman today at approximately the age that you started in. You were getting \$3.25 a day, I think, on the days when you were called to work. What would the man be earning today?

Heide: Well, the minimum would be \$3.50 an hour or a \$130 a week minimum. That's the base rate for warehousemen.

Jones: Well, I guess the ILWU has earned its keep for the working man, without any doubt.

### UNION OBJECTIVES

Jones: What was your basic philosophy when you and your colleagues, Harry Bridges and others, started the union in 1934. What did you expect to gain? Security? Independence or what?

Heide: Yes, security, for one thing. The first and the principle item, of course, was an increase in wages. We obtained security -- that is, this particular union obtained security through establishing the hiring hall.

Jones: And your long-term contract?

Heide: We actually didn't have any union shop until about 1951. The longshoremen likewise, although their hiring



Heide: hall resulted from an arbitration award; whereas, in our case, we established the hiring hall by preventing the shape-up simply by passing motions at our membership meeting that you couldn't report to a plant unless you worked at least three days a week. The next motion, a month or so later, was that you couldn't report to that plant unless you were put to work full time.

Then the employer was forced into the position of either trying to hire someone from the outside to come in to a fully organized warehouse or calling the union hiring hall. Of course, he knew that if he called someone from the outside there would be immediate and prompt action insofar as the men were concerned.

Jones: I think that's a mild summation!

Heide: So he took the course of calling the union hall.

Jones: Why has the ILWU been so successful? Was it the leadership, or why?

Heide: I think the leadership of the union under Harry Bridges had a lot to do with it, but the strong advocacy of rank and file control of the union, of always enforcing everyone's right to speak freely on any subject, encouraged communication among members of the union.

Jones: There wasn't any racial discrimination since the union was founded, was there?

Heide: Well, I wouldn't say that.

Jones: Well, I mean officially.

Heide: Certainly not as a matter of policy. It's a matter of constitutional policy. The union is dedicated to a fight against any form of prejudice or race discrimination.

Jones: Where was the international headquarters?

Heide: Well, originally, international headquarters was split between Seattle, Washington, and San Francisco. The president's office was in San Francisco and the secretary-treasurer's office was in Seattle. At that time, the union was known as District 38 of the International Longshoremen's Association, and the



Heide: officers referred to were district officers. I should say District 38. It was a completely autonomous district, insofar as its right to take action, to pursue policies which were determined by the officers of the international and the membership of the respective local unions. At that time this union was known as Weighers, Warehousemen and Cereal Workers, Local 38-44 of the ILA. The longshoremen in this San Francisco Bay Area were known as -- their local was known as -- local 38-79 of the International Longshoremen's Association.

Jones: While we're on this, the district goes from California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii. Is that the present scope?

Heide: Correct.

Jones: And what's the total number of longshoremen and warehousemen?

Heide: Approximately 75,000.

#### WARREN AND LABOR

Jones: Getting back to the good old days again, did you personally know Earl Warren?

Heide: No, I didn't know Earl Warren personally, that is, in any kind of a personal way. I knew Earl Warren by sight. I met Earl Warren when he was governor, on a delegation visiting Sacramento pursuing some particular bill that was on the governor's desk or before the Assembly or Senate.

Jones: Did you consider him pro- or anti-labor in his terms as governor? Did he vary or was he always consistent one way or the other?

Heide: Well, in those days we considered him anti-labor.

Jones: We're talking about when he was governor, not when he was D.A.?

Heide: That's when he was governor. We considered him anti-labor. In retrospect, however, I think that a lot of us would have to revise some of our thinking about Earl Warren from the time he was governor. Our attitude was prejudiced by our experience with Earl Warren prior to the time that he became governor.



Jones: All right, now that leads me up to just what I was going to ask you. I can't ask you about the twenties because you're not old enough to remember.

Heide: Don't be so sure about that now, because my father was a machinist and was locked out from the 1920 machinist strike and was never able to get another job as a machinist after that. I was a youngster in school then. He was blacklisted after that strike.

Jones: Was the Oakland Tribune anti-labor?

Heide: The Oakland Tribune is anti-labor. The Oakland Tribune, since it was owned by Knowland, to the best of my knowledge has always been anti-union, anti-labor.

Jones: Well, how did Warren fit into that picture? Did you have any instance of Mr. Warren being more unfair than other officials? How was he considered in those days?

Heide: Warren was supported by the Knowland machine or what we considered to be the Knowland machine: Knowland, his newspaper and other supporters, representing the moneyed class of this community.

The Tribune and Knowland have generally controlled the city government of Oakland and the county government of Alameda County for many, many years with only a few exceptions to this kind of control that the Tribune has been able to exercise by the influence it wields through the columns of its newspaper.

Jones: Did the New Deal legislation of the thirties offset the anti-labor policy of the Tribune and the Los Angeles Times? You know, even a newspaper, no matter how powerful, couldn't offset the Wagner Act.

Heide: Well, it offset it some. But New Deal legislation didn't stop the government forces in the community from enforcing illegal laws such as the anti-picketing ordinance, which actually prevented labor from striking, even though Section 7-A of the National Recovery Act, later the National Labor Relations Act, gave labor the right to organize peacefully.

Jones: Under Mr. Warren or his deputies, do you know of any time where labor was treated unfairly? Did they go overboard against labor? Or was he like any other Republican official in a Hoover administration?

Heide: Well, you ask for particular cases and they become





Heide: vague when they get stretched back over the years. You might refer to the prosecution of King, Ramsay and Conner, who were accused of murder.

Jones: Yes, that's the Point Lobos case of 1936.

Heide: That's right.

Jones: Did you have any part in that incident as a labor official?

Heide: No.

Jones: Did you know any of the participants?

Heide: No.

Jones: Did you know any of the participants? Did you know Ramsay or Conner or any of the others?

Heide: I knew King as an officer of the Marine Firemen's Union. He was a progressive, hard working union officer.

Jones: Do you know if any of them are still alive? I understand from Sidney Roger that Ramsay is believed to be alive in Chicago.

Heide: No, I haven't heard.

Jones: I was wondering, did you ever have any inkling that Warren was going to turn out the way he did?

Heide: No. But I want to pursue this other point for a minute. This matter of being anti-labor.

#### ANTI-PICKETING ORDINANCES

Heide: The anti-picketing ordinances really hampered the unions from organizing, prevented the unions, unless they were mighty strong, from picketing in the case of a strike. And there were some pretty tough police captains around, like Captain Brown of the East Oakland station, who seemed to take especial delight in breaking up picket lines.

No one who was ever arrested on a picket line was ever prosecuted. We tried our very best to get someone prosecuted so we could appeal their prosecution and get an interpretation of the law, which we



Heide: eventually did do, in 1937 or '38, during a strike against the F. W. Woolworth Company warehouse in San Francisco. We picketed some of the retail outlets and we put a picket line on the Woolworth store on Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley.

Jones: This is the ILWU.

Heide: Yes, we were aided by some of the university students, also. We just kept a round-robin going between the store and the city hall. As fast as they were put in jail, the union would bail them out and they would go right back to the picket line. For some reason in this case, the judge convicted the first picket who appeared before him. We immediately appealed to the Superior Court where the court held that the law was unconstitutional.

Jones: Was that in San Francisco or in Oakland?

Heide: In Oakland. Alameda County Superior Court.

And then the county appealed that to the appellate court and they upheld the decision of the lower court. It was then appealed to the supreme court of the state, and the state supreme court upheld it. So, in one fell swoop, they were all wiped out all over the state.

Jones: What was the name of that case, do you remember?

Heide: It was the Fels case. Leonard Fels.

#### WARREN'S LABOR FRIENDS

Jones: As district attorney, as attorney general or as governor, did Mr. Warren ever help the ILWU? Or did he crusade against labor?

Heide: Warren never crusaded against labor. As a matter of fact, he had a lot of friends in the labor movement.

Jones: Would this be in the early days? I know he did when he was governor.

Heide: I think before he was governor he did.

Jones: Well, if he were tied in with the Oakland Tribune and his personal friendships with both Joseph Knowland and the senator, how then did he have friends in labor? Was he ever backed by labor in his early days?



- Heide: Well, now, if you go back to the real early days, I don't know. I wasn't paying attention to such things in those days. But he did have friends within the labor movement. The only time that I could honestly cover would be the time that I first became a delegate to the Central Labor Council in 1935.
- Jones: The ILWU was in the AFL at that time?
- Heide: Yes, that's right.
- Jones: That would be the Alameda County Central Labor Council.
- Heide: There was no CIO as such at that time. It was at the 1935 convention that a resolution was passed to set up a committee to organize the unorganized in the mass-production industries. When, in 1936, it wasn't done, Lewis set up the Committee for Industrial Organization on his own.
- Jones: Was Warren considered anti-labor?
- Heide: Insofar as the progressives on the Central Labor Council were concerned, he was considered anti-labor.
- Jones: Could you give a specific as to why? Was it legislation? Or conduct?
- Heide: Well, I've already mentioned the King, Ramsay, Conner case. I myself, together with another member of this union, Bob Moore, was prosecuted by the same assistant district attorney who prosecuted King, Ramsay and Conner, Cy Wehr. It was Wehr.
- Jones: This assistant district attorney's name was Wehr. Yes, you told me that before this interview started.
- Heide: The prosecution used perjured testimony against us.
- Jones: Well, what was the issue?
- Heide: We were charged with throwing a switch with intent to derail a train.
- Jones: On the Oakland waterfront?
- Heide: No. We had organized the cannery warehouse of the Stokeley, Van Camp Food Company, and all the men who joined the union were locked out. The company hired professional strike-breakers from the D. G. Reynolds Detective Agency.



Jones: What year was this?

Heide: This was in 1936.

#### HEIDE'S ARREST

Jones: But what were the incidents that led to your arrest? What were you actually doing? Were you derailing a train? [Laughs]

Heide: We were walking up the railroad siding toward the Stokeley-Van Camp plant.

Jones: Is that the present location of the plant where it still is today in Oakland?

Heide: Right. It's in the same place. And one of these D. G. Reynolds agents came running at us waving a gun.

Jones: Was he in uniform?

Heide: No. We, of course, took off. But, we were subsequently caught up with and turned over to the Oakland Police Department.

Jones: Did the police make an arrest at your home or place of business.

Heide: No, that was within the hour. The Oakland police caught up with us. I don't know what happened, whether he stopped at a phone or because we were on foot for some time. We finally got back to the car. It was at that time that the police caught up with us, picked us up, took us to jail, charged us with attempting to derail a train, throwing a switch with intent to derail a train. Their principal witness was the engineer of the San Leandro drill track.

Jones: What's that?

Heide: Well, it's a track off which the spurs run to various plants, and so on, I should have said that he was a Southern Pacific engineer working on the San Leandro drill track.

Jones: Then what happened?

Heide: Well, our arrest, of course, was reported in the newspapers, and the trial testimony, etc., was reported





- Heide: in the newspapers and attracted attention of a good many railroaders who came down to the old court house, where we were being tried. As a result of them coming to the court, we discovered that the engineer was a strike breaker during the 1921 railroad strike in this area.
- Jones: You mean that he had a perennial anti-labor attitude?
- Heide: That's right. And this was brought out in court, then. His testimony was impeached as a result of these obvious facts.
- Jones: And then you were exonerated?
- Heide: We were completely exonerated by the jury.
- Jones: Very good. This was one of Warren's deputies that prosecuted you. Do you think that Mr. Warren had a hand in this? You mean that it was his policy to prosecute on flimsy evidence or what's your attitude?
- Heide: Well, I can only go on the basis of the record, starting with the anti-picketing ordinances, where there was a deliberate conspiracy not to convict anyone because they were aware of the fact that this was a violation of the right of free assembly guaranteed in the Constitution. Then, of course, the King, Ramsay, Conner case.

In the case of Bob Moore and myself, we were accused of doing something we hadn't done and that we had no explanation for. It came out of somebody's mind. We could understand why the strike breaker would run us away, because this wasn't anything unusual. One other time, they loaded up a whole truck with men that they were using to replace our members, who had been locked out, with empty boxes all the way around the edge of the truck bed, filled it full of men inside, all with pieces of pipe wrapped with tape. Then, I guess they were in hopes that someone would follow them and they would clobber them.

- Jones: Is this the same Stokeley-Van Camp?
- Heide: Yes, but it didn't occur. So they turned around on East 14th Street, and went back down to where our strike kitchen was and knocked the boxes off one side, and all piled out and went into the strike headquarters and did what damage they could do.



Jones: You mean physical damage to the strike headquarters? Breaking things?

Heide: Breaking things. They also caught one fellow in there that was half-crippled that they did some damage to.

Jones: Where was this strike headquarters?

Heide: Oh, it was located just a block west of the Stokeley-Van Camp plant.

Jones: Right in the vicinity there.

Well, how did, as you recall, your fellow workers and Central Labor Council guys in the different crafts and unions consider District Attorney Warren? Was he an enemy of organized labor, like I say, or was he just one of the current Republican officials, not held in any particular light?

The reason I'm asking this is that what seems to puzzle several people -- and I know it does me personally -- whom I've interviewed is how a man could be such an outstanding liberal on the Supreme Court but he doesn't seem to have shown liberal tendencies in his earlier period.

Heide: That's true. That's true. I can't answer that question. I can't answer why. I mean, [laughs] Earl Warren might be able to answer it but I can't answer it.

Earl Warren had a reputation of being a crusading district attorney against vice, corruption, prostitution, gambling, etc., and he pretty much cleaned up Oakland. Even made a dent in Emeryville, although the city officials and the police department in Emeryville were able to keep some operations going for a long period of time.

Jones: Yes, that was sort of an autonomous island, I think, like El Cerrito was when I first came here.

#### RANCHO SAN PABLO

Heide: That was the El Cerrito strip then. That was even more wide-open. On the El Cerrito strip (in Contra Costa County) there were any number of gambling joints, the most elite of which was the Rancho San Pablo. The



- Heide: Rancho San Pablo was bought by Black Jack Jerome who came out here in the first instance to break the 1921 strike of the street cars in San Francisco. He brought in strike breakers to do that job.
- Jones: I happened to interview Warren Billings about three or four years ago, and he had some very choice things to say about Black Jack Jerome. He used to be a platform worker or something. He's still alive.
- Heide: Let me say a couple more words about Rancho. The Rancho was a real nice place to go for a ten course dinner with live entertainment, the best acts. Two dollars on week-nights and \$2.50 on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Jones: Was that sort of a come-on like they use in Reno?
- Heide: That's right. Because they had what they called the "blue room" which operated. This was where the crap tables and black jack tables and the other gambling paraphernalia were.
- Jones: That was in Contra Costa County.
- Heide: That was in Contra Costa County. That was operating during the period that Miller was sheriff of Contra Costa County. Matter of fact, he and his brother owned one of these gambling places, the Ninety-Nine Club. It was on the El Cerrito strip. Finally they closed the places after Earl Warren was elected Attorney General. They raided the Rancho San Pablo, but the Rancho San Pablo got a call from the Attorney General's office before the raid occurred so that they took all of their good equipment out and put in a lot of old equipment that they had. Then they made a big show out of burning it up. There were pictures in the newspapers of burning the roulette wheels and so on. As a matter of fact, they were all stored neatly away in the shed just in back of the building. The reason I know that all of this occurred is because my wife was the assistant to the accountant. As a matter of fact, she did actually most of the work. She made up all of the cash for the casino and she kept the books.
- Jones: This was when Mr. Warren was Attorney General and he was credited with shutting this down?
- Heide: It was '39, '40, in there.



Jones: How did he function? Did he have a hatchet force?

Heide: I don't want to leave it hanging there. Wait a minute, hold it! I don't want to do Earl Warren an injustice. I didn't say that Earl Warren tipped off the Rancho San Pablo.

Jones: Oh, no, I didn't mean to indicate that.

Heide: No, I don't want to infer even that he did, because, later on there was a second raid, and they got the real equipment, that time. The Rancho went down with a bang. The operators of the Rancho were Petchart and Kessel, who were summoned before the Kefauver Committee when it was out here.

Jones: Oh, that would be in the forties. In the fifties, I guess.

Heide: Well, they operated all around here. They operated book shops and so on.

Jones: Well, I was going to ask you how Mr. Warren's staff functioned. Did they have a hatchet group like District Attorney Hogan in New York? They used to go around chopping doors in and all that sort of thing. Or did he use the local authorities? How did they actually make those raids when he was Attorney General? Do you remember that?

Heide: No. I really don't.

Jones: Well, I infer from what you say and from your recollections that Mr. Warren's political strength, which qualified him to run for governor, must have come because he had the respect of tens of thousand voters here because he really did a good efficient job in eradicating vice, prostitution and gambling, is that it?

Heide: Yes, I'd say that.

Jones: Did he differ in his outlook in labor's eyes? Was he any different as pro or con labor from any other city or county officials? Did he loom up that way?

Heide: No, not at that time, no.

Jones: He was just another official.

Heide: Yes. Just another cog in the Knowland machine.





Jones: Maybe he was a latent liberal. Most men while in their twenties or thirties, give an indication of what they are going to become politically and often in other ways.

### POLITICIANS NEED MONEY

Heide: Well, people who run for political office need one thing. They all need just one thing. That's money. The easiest and the quickest source of money is, of course, to get it from the people who have it. So if contributions are made to a political campaign, the candidate generally (this is not anything that attaches just to Earl Warren) feels obligated toward the person or persons who make contributions to see that he is elected to office.

However, if he's freed from that feeling of obligation, his attitudes and the way he reacts and thinks about things may be entirely different.

Jones: Do you mean that Warren was beholden to his sources of support, such as the Knowland machine, or that he felt free from any obligation to his support from campaigns?

Heide: I mean that any political campaigner or office holder is almost bound to feel obligation to his financial supporters. Politics costs a lot of money.

However, if a person is placed in a position where he feels he has a great amount of influence and power, such as the Attorney General or Governor's office, or if he is appointed to a position where he does not have to depend upon such financial support, then he feels more independent and free and his inherent qualities show up.

Jones: He never exactly had a machine, but he had this bi-partisan support. He had wide support and he had the money to finance his campaigns and he wouldn't have to go along with the monied group, the employer group. Is that what you mean?

Heide: Yes, I think that has been the general feeling so far as the progressives in the labor movement are concerned. But I don't agree that he didn't have a machine. There's been a machine all the time. Still is.



Jones: Well, I was trying to get away from the usual thought of a Democratic machine or a Republican machine because he did run on a non-partisan basis and he did have some labor support. I'm talking about his later career as governor, now.

#### NON-PARTISAN APPEASERS

Heide: Well, that was the big push, that he was non-partisan. The CIO unions opposed him when he ran as governor. They sold stamps for a dollar each which, as I recall, said something like: "Defeat Non-Partisan Appeasers." This was a very dirty word for us to use in those days.

Jones: Oh, that was after the World War II appeasers.

Heide: Just prior to the war and after Czechoslovakia and so on.

Jones: Well, what do you think was his success overall? How could he charm so many people into voting for him in both parties in the overall? Not just labor but, you know, the whole spectrum of California politics? He beat Olson handily. I guess he was the only governor, at least this century, that was ever re-elected the way he was. Do you have any thoughts on why he was efficient or what?

Heide: Well, number one, as far as defeating Olson, Olson defeated himself. He alienated his own support. He was in office three or four months when he started alienating support from himself by trying to appease the wolf pack that was at his heels. He kept throwing them bones and pretty soon they had him on the run and he couldn't stop running. And he lost the support that he had. He certainly wasn't -- I wouldn't consider him -- a good governor. I would consider his election to have been a good thing for the state of California because it resulted in certain actions being taken, like the freeing of Tom Mooney, but I wouldn't and couldn't agree that he was a good governor. I think Warren was by far a better governor than Olson.

Jones: I guess most people thought so when the election results came in. Can you think of anything that you'd like to add to this interview in the light of the past? Here we are in 1969 when Mr. Warren is about



Jones: ready to retire, I gather from the public press, in a month or two.

Heide: Well, I think he's an example of how we can be fooled by people, thinking that you know them. There were a lot of people in this country that believed that Hugo Black was the wrong man for a lot of reasons, including his former membership in the Ku Klux Klan, to be a member of the Supreme Court, but I think that people would have to agree that the record of Hugo Black is a real record of sound decisions all the way down the line.

Jones: Right, I don't think there is any doubt about that. Where would you say Mr. Warren's worst mistake in judgment was? Do you share the opinion that it might possibly have been the taking of the Japanese off the coast and putting them in the so-called internment centers? Based on his legal knowledge, would you say that that was a mistake in judgment?

Heide: Yes, I certainly would say that it was a mistake in judgment.

Jones: It was his worst one that you can think of?

Heide: Maybe not only that, I think it was also a mistake in judgment for him to head up the investigating committee that sought out the facts in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Jones: Why is that? You mean that it isn't a proper function for a jurist?

Heide: No, because they buried the facts. They buried all the records, ad infinitum.



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Earl Warren Oral History Project

U. S. Simonds

## A CARPENTER'S COMMENTS

An Interview Conducted by  
Frank N. Jones





U.S. Simonds



Left to right: J. Howard Walser, Governor Earl Warren, U.S. Simonds. 1950.



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U. S. Simonds: A CARPTENTER'S COMMENTS

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ulysses Scott Simonds, Jr. (born 1900) was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to document his role in the development of union and civic affairs in San Mateo county, and Earl Warren's 1950 gubernatorial campaign.

Interviewer: Frank N. Jones, former publicist for the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, with extensive public affairs knowledge from his wide journalistic background. Research material developed by the Regional Oral History Office, with guidance on general questions from principal investigators of the Earl Warren Project.

### Conduct of the

Interview: A single interview was held on August 26, 1969, in Mr. Simonds' office of Carpenters' Local 162 at 50 North B Street, San Mateo, a month before his retirement.

### Additional

Material: Mr. Simonds has donated to The Bancroft Library his personal file of press clippings, organizational papers, and photographs of the 1950 Republican gubernatorial campaign.

### Editing:

The transcribed taped interview was edited in the Regional Oral History Office by Miriam Feingold. Mr. Simonds reviewed the edited text, making few additions to his original remarks.

### Narrative Account of Mr. Simonds and Progress of the

Interview: From a pioneer California family, Simonds apprenticed as a carpenter in San Francisco, working under his father who was a construction superintendent in the 1920s when the building trades were already a strong segment of the labor movement. As frequently happens, this master carpenter was also a builder, operating his own firm until 1957 when he became business manager for the San Mateo County Building Trades, giving him the dual labor-management point of view also represented by Ernest Vernon, another interviewee in this series.



Simonds discusses the postwar building boom and the satisfactions of the carpenter's trade: "things that you have built are part and parcel of your everyday living and of your community." He was very much a part of that life, serving as mayor of Burlingame for three terms in the 1940s, and as trustee of the College of San Mateo for 25 years, during the period when it developed one of the handsomest campuses in the state, classically modern buildings on a sweeping hilltop site.

The Industrial Association, also mentioned by interviewee Joe Chaudet, is described by Simonds, for whom the "American plan" of tying builders' financing to non-union hiring was a major labor frustration.

From local politics, he went on to state politics as co-chairman of Earl Warren's third campaign for governor, recruited by Judge Murray Draper, a fellow College of San Mateo trustee. Simonds stresses Warren's straightforwardness and non-partisanship, feeling "complete confidence that he was an honest politician." The carpenters were particularly pleased with the postwar building programs and felt that Warren had pledged himself to this and lived up to the pledge.

On the abortive 1945-47 efforts to pass state-supported health insurance, Simonds comments that Warren did everything possible to create a position for it in California, but in general people were not ready for such a change, "although we felt an improvement should be made. The closer we must live together the more the physical and mental condition of each citizen affects the entire public welfare," he believes summarizes Warren's philosophy of improvement in the entire health field.

Gabrielle Morris  
Regional Oral History Office



CIVIC ACTIVITIES AND BACKGROUND

Jones: Mr. Simonds, could you outline some of your major civic and community activities in San Mateo County? And I know to do this you'll have to draw a pretty deep breath because I know you are often described as one of San Mateo County's most active citizens.

Simonds: Well, I have served as a trustee of the College of San Mateo for twenty-seven years. I originally brought the thought of establishing a blood bank in San Mateo County. I feel certainly a deep sense of gratitude for the support that was given by labor and the citizens of San Mateo County in establishing what was then the San Mateo County Blood Bank and at the present time is now the Peninsula Memorial Blood Bank.

Jones: About what year was that?

Simonds: That was 1942 that the blood bank opened for business, although it was proposed by organized labor in 1941. Organized labor donated \$500 to start the process of establishing a blood bank and remodeling an old building on the junior college campus. Today this blood bank is one of the outstanding community endeavors in the blood bank industry in the United States. I have been a trustee of that organization and have served for the last six years as president of the Peninsula Memorial Blood Bank.

As trustee of the College of San Mateo, I served three terms as president of the board, and this has been one of my happy endeavors in public life. I've seen three campuses established for the students of our San Mateo County and our surrounding communities.

Jones: That certainly must be indicative of the tremendous growth in this county in the post-war years, I should think.

Simonds: We have the second highest attendance on the junior college level in the state of California. At the College of San Mateo last year, we had 8500 day students and 12,000 night students over the entire county.

In serving the city of Burlingame, I served on a number of commissions -- the fire commission,



Simonds: the police commission, and the planning commission, I served eight years as a councilman, three terms as mayor.

Jones: What years were you mayor?

Simonds: I was mayor in '46, '48 and '50.

Jones: Are there any other of your numerous activities you'd care to comment on?

Simonds: I've always been active in the Red Cross. I'm past president of the Boy's Club of San Mateo, one of the builders of it along with my colleagues in the labor movement, a very successful community relationship for organized labor and certainly a wonderful outlet for the youth of our community.

I've been very active in the March of Dimes, the Family Service Agency and occasionally active in raising funds for bond drives for schools and community approaches to their problems, also county.

I've served on the greater highways committee of the County of San Mateo. I am at present serving on that, too, and also appointed on the Bay Area Transportation Study Commission by Governor Edmund Brown and reappointed by Governor Ronald Reagan.

Jones: You have certainly shown that you are one of the illustrious citizens of the county. Are those about the high points?

Simonds: Well, those are the high points of my community service. For labor I have filled every position, excepting secretary, of the Carpenters' Union, one of the largest individual organizations in San Mateo County -- I served ten years as business representative, and I served for twelve years as secretary-treasurer, business manager of the Building and Construction Trades Council of San Mateo County.

I have served as a negotiator for carpenters for the Bay Area. I served on that position with many of the well-known labor people of the carpenters, including Secretary Dave Ryan of the District Council of Carpenters. Later on, Bertelini.





Jones: I'd like to go back even further. I'd like to know about your parents.

Simonds: Well, my grandfather was an early pioneer in California. My father was raised in California, Nevada City.

Jones: What was your father's first name?

Simonds: Ulysses Scott Simonds. My mother came with her family from New Zealand and landed in San Francisco when she was two years old, and recently died at the age of ninety-seven. In March she was ninety-seven and would have been ninety-eight in October of this year, 1969.

Jones: What was her maiden name?

Simonds: Her name was Rebecca Eliza Goddard. She was one of nine children. She has a sister, who will be one hundred years old in November of this year, living in Novato.

Jones: What's the sister's name?

Simonds: Her first name is May. Her middle name is Gertrude. She married my dad's younger brother -- well, there's two years difference between the brothers. The two brothers married sisters.

Jones: How did your father's family happen to settle in San Francisco?

Simonds: Well, in the early days in San Francisco, my grandfather worked for the Union Ice Company --

Jones: What was his name?

Simonds: His name was Henry Scott Simonds.

Jones: That was the old Union Ice Company which still exists, doesn't it?

Simonds: I don't think they are still in business. I'm not sure.

Jones: Why did your mother's family come to San Francisco from New Zealand?

Simonds: My grandfather, Richard Goddard, heard of the need for mechanics and so packed bag, baggage and family



Simonds: off to California. And my mother's father was a blacksmith who worked for the old Risdon Iron Works in San Francisco.

Jones: That was later taken over by Bethlehem, wasn't it?

Simonds: Yes.

Jones: All right, now let's see. Where were you born?

Simonds: I was born in Fresno, California, September, 1900.

Jones: How did your father get to Fresno?

Simonds: My father was sent to Fresno as a manager for the ice plant there. We only stayed there a couple of years and we moved to Richmond district.

Jones: Did your father work for the Union Ice Company, also?

Simonds: At that time, I'm not positive if it was for the Union Ice Company, but he worked for an ice plant at Fresno, California.

Jones: Where did your parents meet?

Simonds: Truly, I'm not certain, but I believe in San Francisco.

Jones: Well, you weren't around at the time. [Laughs] What year were they married?

Simonds: 1891 in San Francisco. My dad was twenty-one. My mother was eighteen.

Jones: Ulysses is a very impressive name, and certainly is an unusual name. Of course you were named after your father. Was your father named after your grandfather?

Simonds: I wouldn't really know on that particular point. However, I will say that carrying that name of Ulysses through my younger years was rather trying because I was known as "Useless," "Uli," "U," "Les," and I often said to my mother, "Why did you ever call me Ulysses?" and she said, "I want you to be somebody in this life of ours."

When I got into politics, that initial "U.S." was tremendously helpful. [Laughs] Especially during the war years -- Second World War.



BUILDING TRADES IN TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

- Jones: In a prior conversation, you told me that you got into the labor movement as a carpenter back in 1926 here in San Mateo. The carpenters were about the strongest of the craft unions ever since the nineties, I guess, weren't they?
- Simonds: Actually, the carpenters have always been a very strong segment of the labor movement, and they encompassed and embodied unionism from the early days in the entire Bay Area. They were tremendously strong. Of course, some of our great leaders came out of the carpenters' ranks. I worked in San Francisco prior to coming here and served most of my apprenticeship in San Francisco, although I worked for my dad, who was a superintendent on large work -- large buildings, office buildings, hotels and apartments.
- Jones: Can you recall some of those in San Francisco?
- Simonds: Well, the Hotel California was the last building --
- Jones: Where is the Hotel California?
- Simonds: Taylor and O'Farrell. And we built a number of tall buildings, apartment houses in San Francisco for Matt -- M.A. Little.
- Jones: Anyway, you stayed in this area. Weren't San Francisco and San Francisco counties both undergoing a big building boom, especially homes, during the period?
- Simonds: Yes, prior to the Depression, the building industry was in a very healthy condition and started to slow up about 1929. Then we came into the Depression period, you see. Around the twenties, we were under the American Plan, and there was the continual fight, of course, with the Industrial Association for the maintenance of union conditions.
- Jones: Was that Industrial Association an association of employers?
- Simonds: Yes.
- Jones: How did they try to frustrate labor's gains?



- Simonds: In San Mateo County we were very fortunate because the labor movement was a consolidated group and some of the finest old country mechanics were established in this area. Our homes and the construction industry were of the highest type under union conditions. Not too many commercial buildings -- mostly fine residences and schools -- in Hillsborough, Atherton, Woodside, some beautiful places in Burlingame, Burlingame Hills. Our unions here were in a very healthy position because of the fact that they were able to establish their own material yard and supply the materials that the smaller contractors, especially in San Francisco, were unable to obtain unless they were in agreement with the Industrial Association. Cement, sand and rock and gravel were extremely critical to obtain.
- Jones: Was that a unique situation?
- Simonds: Very unique, because under today's conditions, of course, it would be a restraint of trade, and yet Billy George, as head of the Industrial Association, was able to control his employer groups in a very vigorous organization that was able to combat the labor groups because of the fact that the labor groups had called a General Strike in San Francisco and were rather demoralized in the twenties, after World War I.
- Jones: Those would be the years they took on the American Plan. Billy George -- what was his title with the Industrial Association?
- Simonds: I would say Billy George was the executive secretary of the Industrial Association.
- Jones: Now this Industrial Association, did that prevail in both the counties?
- Simonds: On a very minor scale here in San Mateo County, but it enveloped the entire Bay Area, really. Some of the large cement plants and yards naturally belonged to this employer group.
- Jones: How did labor fit in the Industrial Association? Did the members have shares?
- Simonds: Well, we didn't fit into the Industrial Association. We were opposed to the Industrial Association.





Simonds: This was a strictly an employer group of contractors, sub-contractors and material suppliers.

Jones: Why would that be in restraint of trade today?

Simonds: In that if you did not, as an employer, sign up with the Industrial Association, you were unable to obtain cement, sand, rock, tile and material for your jobs.

Jones: Well, what happened to this Industrial Association?

Simonds: Well, they are still in existence. We have a group here. After the American Plan fight, the unions were able to maintain a position which they were able to carry well up to the Depression. The Industrial Association no longer was the fighting force that they had been during the American Plan fight.

Jones: All right, well then, today, their counterpart --

Simonds: They still have industrial associations or contractors' groups, yes, but they're composed of the miscellaneous groups of sub-contractors. A few of the smaller general contractors belong, but most of the general contractors belong to the Associated General Contractors of Northern California and to the Peninsula General Contractors Association of San Mateo County. Many of the sub-contractors belong to the Industrial Association of San Mateo County, but most of the subs belong to a group specializing in their business only.

Jones: It must give you great personal satisfaction to look about you on your way to work or one of your trips and gaze upon what your hands have wrought upon the landscape, philosophically speaking. Carpenters are literally responsible for every structure, commercial, school, dwelling, everything you look at. Doesn't this give you great personal satisfaction?

Simonds: It does. I think every carpenter has this satisfaction in passing a building, whether it is of unique architecture, or a school or an outstanding building in a community. There is a sense of pride that you were part of it. I think that this is one of the satisfactions of the carpenter trade is that you have created, you have built, and things that you have built are part and parcel of the



Simonds: everyday living and of your community.

Jones: What did San Mateo look like forty years ago? The Benjamin Franklin Hotel was the looming building, and what about travel on the penninsula?

Simonds: Well, of course our transportation system -- if you think things are chaotic today. On a Sunday then it would take you about three and one-half hours to go from Burlingame to San Francisco, because of your crowded El Camino Real, which was adjacent to the number 40 street car line, which charged 10¢ going from San Francisco to San Mateo. Its terminal here went down San Mateo drive and around the corner and came up Baldwin and then returned via California Drive to Burlingame and then followed the right-of-way and adjacent to El Camino past the cemeteries up into Daly City and down Mission Street.

Jones: The old right-of-way can still be seen. Then the El Camino was probably two lanes -- one each way.

I imagine in those days the county was predominately a home area. There wasn't much industry.

Simonds: Very few industries at that time. In fact, the industries in Burlingame are practically nil excepting the old Millbrae Dairy between Burlingame and Millbrae. That was the Ogden D. Mills estate which the family owned and included all land up to the present Skyline Boulevard from Millbrae on the west, the bay to the east and extended from Millbrae on the north to the edge of Burlingame on the South. That was all one family's piece of property. That was the only industry that was adjacent to Burlingame and Millbrae at that time, if you would call that an industry. South San Francisco had the Western Pipe & Steel Company and Southern Pacific Repair Yards and Redwood City had the large Franks Tannery and lumber docks.

Jones: How many members of the union were there back in 1926 when you first joined, roughly, and how many today?

Simonds: Well, in the San Mateo union, I would say in San Mateo alone -- of course there've always been four locals in San Mateo -- at that time, membership in San Mateo was about 275-280



Jones: What does it run today?

Simonds: Today in the San Mateo local it would be about 1300.

Jones: Well, what was the average carpenter's wage during that period?

Simonds: Well, the wage that came out of the arbitration board at San Francisco, I believe, was 90¢ an hour. That was about 1921 or 2, around in there.

Then it went up to \$1.25 per hour, as I recall it, until the Depression. After the Depression, it was necessary to build it up again. I recall about '34 it was about \$1.75 or \$2.00 per hour.

Jones: What does it run today, excluding the fringe benefits?

Simonds: Excluding the fringe benefits for carpenters, it runs about \$6.21 per hour.

Jones: Can you think of other major benefits to America that have come through the labor movement as you have known it?

Simonds: Well, I can readily see that, as far as San Mateo County, the labor movement has been a very integral part of our entire living. Our labor people associate with the biggest of the businessmen and they have the respect of their community. They have benefited the working people by lifting their standard of living, their working conditions, their hours, and always on the alert for a better education for their children and for all children, so that America as a whole has benefited a great deal by the philosophy of labor, which is the uplifting of the individual and the dignity of man.

Jones: The presence of enourmously wealthy people, these many fine homes here on this Peninsula, sort of put San Mateo County in a unique position. It isn't representative really of hardly any other county, is it?

Simonds: I think you're absolutely right. Your analysis is correct of the working man's position in San Mateo County. In the first place, in a great



Simonds: number of the communities, the working man -- that is, the skilled mechanic -- was truly a craftsman. People of means, in calling upon them for services, appreciated the type of work that was done and the beauty of the product that was finished by the various craftsmen. There was a deep admiration for the background of the individual, and that respect has grown through the years by those people who built these beautiful homes, commercial buildings, schools and city halls and court houses.

Jones: Of course you've been active in other things because you're just an extremely active man, but you've spent your lifetime in labor. Has the labor movement been good to you as an individual? Have you been repaid for this effort that you've put out in all these thousands of meetings and hours?

Simonds: As far as myself and my family are concerned, we've gotten back many times the efforts that we've put forth for labor. We've gotten it back in satisfaction and a sense of appreciation for the efforts put forth by labor in arousing the desire of the individual to improve himself. We have seen this in many, many cases. Each of us have been ambitious for our children, and our children have gone on to better things and are a vital part of the American way of life. As far as the amount of time and effort that my wife and I put forth, this is our way of life, and has repaid us many times over. I have been very fortunate in having been an employer. My dad and I were in the contracting business here, but I still retained my union card. So I have seen both sides of the picture. I think employer-employee relations have been mutually helped by the attitude of organized labor in San Mateo County and employer groups.

Jones: Yes, you were in a very unique position. You've seen both management and the labor side.

Simonds: We developed in the early days a great number of the homes in north Burlingame. The property that we owned was twenty minutes from Broadway -- walking distance -- and people thought it was too far out.

Jones: Labor, like any large group, has detractors.





Jones: College people don't seem, as they say, "turned on" by a labor career. In organized labor, like any other effort, you've got to have the youth because they're the future. Do you see anything to worry about in the fact that labor is not getting the cream of youth like the industries are?

Simonds: This is a very critical point, in my opinion, for organized labor today is not able to provide the incentive to these young men coming into industry as apprentices.

We have found that the majority of them, after being initiated, very seldom attend meetings, very seldom talk on subjects that are important to them. Consequently, they would have a tendency to be skeptical of some of the things that we talk about.

Jones: Oh, but that's by no means limited to labor. Jim Garret, the retired San Francisco printer told me that in the middle twenties the biggest lobby in Sacramento was the Native Sons. You know, they put through the Japanese Exclusion Act. And now they can't get anybody to a meeting.

But I was thinking more of the intellectual side -- the brightest guys on the campus. Did they ever go into labor?

Simonds: No, no because, actually, you have to come up the hard way in labor, in the majority of cases, in order to be elected to a position. You must have a background and understanding of the trials and tribulations and the things that labor stands for.

Jones: And the internationals probably hired the bright young men as economists and that sort of thing.

Simonds: We are fortunate today to be in a better position to hire young and ambitious men because of our health, welfare, vacation and retirement fringe benefits. Those young men are in a better position to understand labor now than in my time, because we did not have these positions open to us. You had to be elected, and you were successful because of your popularity and understanding of the affairs of your county and your labor movement.



Jones: Then you are not too worried about the position of American youth in the labor movement?

Simonds: Yes, it bothers me, although I am about to retire and consequently, my particular worry is simply within myself. I express, from time to time, to these young men my desire that they become more active in the labor movement and more active in their meetings, but whether it falls on deaf ears only time will tell.

Jones: Nobody seems to have the answer to that.

Simonds: We are no different than other labor leaders, churches, lodges, and fraternal organization.

#### EARL WARREN

Jones: When did you first become attracted to Earl Warren to the point you -- and I understand you are a Democrat -- decided that he was the best man running for governor in 1950? Had you heard good reports from neighboring Alameda County? How did you arrive at the decision to work for him?

Simonds: Well, I was very friendly with Judge Murray Draper, who had been a member of the San Mateo Junior College Board.

I had followed Warren's career to a certain extent because he was widely tied in with actions of labor as a district attorney in Alameda County. He appeared from time to time as, not siding with labor, but on the other hand I got the feeling that this was a man who was very fair, honest, and was simply interested in doing what was right according to the law. He administered the law as he saw it, and at times it did not sit too well with labor.

Jones: About what times did you have in mind?

Simonds: In the Thirties.

Jones: You heard about him because you're adjoining Alameda County and you heard of him from friends and you were meeting constantly with other labor people, I presume.

What about your first meeting with Earl



Jones: Warren? Where did it physically take place? Do you recall that?

Simonds: No, I really don't. I was trying to go over that background, and I am not too certain. I believe it was a meeting when J. Howard Walzer and myself were selected to head the county up as co-chairmen for his re-election, but I do not have a distinct recollection prior to that.

Jones: Did you ever talk to him at any length?

Simonds: Yes, I talked with him from time to time. I couldn't bring up the specific things that I discussed. Generally speaking, he always impressed me as a man of tremendous depth, tremendous power and drive. His integrity, in my opinion, was just outstanding.

I was very much impressed with his family -- very fine wife. They made an excellent impression wherever they went together. Of course, his personality was such that it permeated the very atmosphere when he presented himself before a group. His answers to various questions were always so straight forward -- no hemming and hawing.

Jones: And he didn't make rash promises.

Simonds: No, I never asked him for anything specific. I never asked him to do anything. He was the type of man that you wouldn't ask. You knew that, if your case had merit, he'd give it his full consideration and be very fair in his judgment.

Jones: When you and your fellow unionists here in San Mateo County decided to work for his re-election, what did you expect to gain? Could you tell us some of the issues involved? What was uppermost in your mind?

Simonds: Uppermost in my mind was to help a man that I felt would be to the best interest to the greatest number. I had no specific thought that he would be particularly helpful to labor, nor opposed to labor. He would be absolutely fair. His background and seemingly his philosophy were such that I was not looking for anything specific. I was not looking to assist labor in any way, but



Simonds: just to be of service to all the people.

Jones: Would you say that he was the type of man you would have been proud of as a governor because as an individual he was so outstanding?

Simonds: I was very happy to have been associated with him. I was tremendously pleased to have him in Burlingame when I was on the city council and introduce him to my wife, mother and dad. It was one of the highlights of their lives and mine to have met the governor. They were tremendously impressed with him. This was one of the happy campaigns that I had been associated with.

Jones: You don't recall any personal discussion with Mr. Warren that enabled you to learn of his approaches to politics and government?

Simonds: No, I can't say that I could recall any specific thing that I had discussed with him, just general issues that had arisen in the campaign. Naturally those were the things we discussed because those were the questions that were being asked us from time to time, and of course, the brochures that were gotten out at that time usually took care of many of the questions that arise during any campaign and arose at that particular time, of course.

Jones: You've probably met every important politician in the state in the last few decades. Why was Warren different from others? Like, for example, Mr. Olson?

Simonds: Yes, I knew Mr. Olson very well, and in fact, I have a picture in his campaign.

Jones: Did you work for him?

Simonds: I didn't recall having done a great deal of work in that campaign.

Jones: Why was Mr. Warren different?

Simonds: Well, I think that one of the points that made Mr. Warren different was because of the fact that he was supported by, not only his own party, but the Democratic groups as well.





Jones: When he ran as a non-partisan?

Simonds: He was of the Republican party, but California could vote for the man. And the average working man and business man felt that he had been an outstanding governor -- very fair and progressive and for the good of the state of California.

Jones: Generally, do you think they felt that he'd handled the post-war problems well? You know these problems that mounted up during the war -- highway construction, that sort of thing?

Simonds: They built up very rapidly, of course. He was able to set up a veterans' program and work with the returning veteran, I think, in a very satisfactory manner. Our financial status was such that he was seemingly able to provide, through the legislature, money for building programs that would sustain the prosperity of the state.

Jones: Yes, that seems to be the general opinion.

Then you generally feel that his first election and then his consequent ones meant progress and growth for California?

Simonds: No doubt about it.

Jones: It certainly helped in your business, the construction industry. Did you think it was faith? People had faith in Warren, didn't they? In his integrity?

Simonds: I would say so.

Jones: That's what I hear over and over.

Simonds: Once a person heard that man speak, and if they were able to meet him face to face, there was complete confidence that he was an honest politician. He meant what he said and he would do everything possible to carry out the program that he had instituted.

Jones: Well, after he was elected, how did he demonstrate to you as an individual, as a citizen of the country, and as a labor leader that you'd backed the right man? Was there something that you were particularly pleased with?



Simonds: Well, of course, at that time, as business representative of the carpenters, we had complete, fairly complete employment. Many, many of our state projects were successfully carried out. You had the feeling that these were some of the things that he had pledged. Your people were working. Benefits had been accrued to all the working people because of their employment. So you felt that he had carried out his pledge.

Jones: Are you thinking not only of the state of California's tremendous building program after the war? They had to build highways, highway offices in every county, and the schools.

Simonds: Right, right.

Jones: Were you satisfied with the means that he took to encourage the development of industry in the state?

Simonds: Well, truly, I would not be in a position to state a basis for that, because I was not in that particular approach of our industrial life.

Jones: Right. Well, let's try it conversely.

Any successful politician has enemies, as well as friends, and also makes his share of political errors. Now, there was the King, Ramsay, Conner, 1936 Point Lobos ship killing, which you said you were not familiar with personally.

Simonds: That's true.

Jones: So we won't bother with that. Did your unions here take any part in that union defense fund? Do you recall that?

Simonds: Not that I recall. No.

Jones: Still, on the negative side, what actions if any did San Mateo County unions or union organizations take in regard to the internment of Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor? Did you feel that this was a major mistake in the Constitutional judgment of Earl Warren? Did you feel that way in 1942?

Also, at any time in your recollection, did Warren do anything to bring down the anger on the part of labor organizations here? What mistakes



Jones: did he make? Do you consider the Japanese internment a mistake?

Simonds: Well, this is Monday-morning quarter-backing. I believe that, as a young man, I felt very bitter to think that this country had been attacked by Japan. So many of our young men were going into the service. We lost some of them from this organization. It would be awfully easy to judge now and say that this was not the right thing to do.

On the other hand, when the fever of war is running high, the people are not approaching things on a rational basis. To say that some of the things that Warren did at that time were wrong, I wouldn't want to judge, because public opinion I think at that time, was strongly in favor of whatever actions he took.

Jones: You kind of go along with the exigencies of the times. That's what most people I've talked to seem to do.

There's another point on which progressive elements in unions feel that they were let down by Warren. In 1946 and '47 and '49, and even '51, Warren projected a medical plan, something like Medicare is now or Medi-Cal, and it didn't go very far. Germaine Bulcke of Harry Bridge's union, who is now retired, was very active in it and he claims that Warren could have mustered votes in the legislature to push this program through if he had wanted to. It was Mr. Bulcke's impression and that of his fellow unionists, so-called progressives in the labor movement right after the war, that Warren didn't do it because he didn't basically believe in it, that he was talked into it, trying to improve his image with liberals in the Democratic Party so he could run for president.

That's one impression, but an automotive engineer in Alameda County who's known Warren for forty-five years, said that it wasn't true, that Warren would have gone ahead. He was always progressive, but there was no sense in banging his head on an oaken door, as it were. He didn't have the votes. The medical plan was too far ahead of its time. Do you have an impression?



Simonds: I would say that is a correct statement. I don't believe that he was lacking in a progressive approach to public health. I feel that he did everything possible to create a position for a public health program in the state of California, but I don't believe people were ready for the direct change that was necessary, for instance in the period as we have today. I don't believe we were educated for any radical change, although we felt an improvement should be made. I think the governor did, within his power and within his influence, I think about as much as anyone could do at the time.

Jones: Sort of opening the door for future consideration.

Simonds: I think he established a health approach. In fact his statement, "The closer we must live together, the more the physical and mental condition of each citizen affects the entire public welfare." That's a statement of his and I believe that this was his philosophy of improvement in the entire health field.

Jones: Do you remember the date on that statement?

Simonds: This was his report to the legislature in his first term of office.

Jones: You must have had a great deal to do with pensions. Still on the negative side of Mr. Warren, a number of people in the state felt that the George McLain pension movement would never have gotten as far as it did if Mr. Warren had given a little more muscle to upping pension payments.

I think pension payments were about \$80 and he demanded about \$120. This forced a compromise. If you were a young person at the time, you thought it was horrible, but if you were approaching pension age, you thought it was good. What did you feel at the time?

Simonds: Truly, I was a young man at the time. For ten years I was on a negotiating committee. There were about six of us for the carpenters in the entire Bay Area with Dave Ryan as Secretary-treasurer of the Bay District Council of Carpenters. His





Simonds: philosophy was "Hours, wages and working conditions." "Don't worry about fringes. We'll take care of our own insurance." And I think this was the attitude of most labor people at that time. "Give us the wages, and we'll take care of our own insurance."

As far as pensions are concerned, this was secondary on our minds, because we were determined to build up our income and felt that we could take care of those things ourselves. As far as the state pension was concerned, I would say that the State Federation of Labor was continually fighting for greater pensions, but I don't think that labor, itself, showed anymore than a passing interest. I don't recall any vigorous campaign.

Jones: Of course individual labor union members' interest in pensions must have overlapped into the public sector, because they did have mothers and fathers and uncles and aunts.

Simonds: We had members of labor organizations that would turn down a 25¢ per month assessment to a home for their own aged members. They've done it right in the carpenters. It wasn't until by a continual educational program that we were able to get international pensions for carpenters upon reaching the age of sixty-five and thirty years a member, and the fringe benefits of today.

Jones: When you think back on the century, it's a wonder anything got done, isn't it?

Simonds: Yes, when the younger member was vigorously opposed to paying out anything that would give an older member an increased pension, and right within your own organization. So, there was a good deal of apathy all along the line as far as pensions were concerned. Everybody figured they should make enough money so that they could take care of their own pensions.

Jones: Getting back again to these county campaigns, you participated in, how did Warren go over with the voters? What did Mr. Warren have that other men didn't have?



Simonds: Well, you've got to realize that in the campaign that we were so active in he was an incumbent. In San Mateo County we were able to establish luncheons and dinners and a schedule where he would appear in each city at a certain time. He had a bus with him and his wife. We'd pick up the mayor in the town, and the politicians in the town and appear before the city hall. The turnout, I can remember distinctly, at Burlingame was very substantial. Then the luncheon was held at the Villa Chartier and that was just packed.

Jones: Well, you are saying in essence, there weren't any particular problems, were there?

Simonds: His appeal was just tremendous to both the young and old. His personality just projected itself right out.

Jones: At any time during his career as governor did you ever have any inkling that Mr. Warren would go on and possibly become the nation's greatest liberal Supreme Court Justice?

Simonds: Truly, I don't believe any of us look that far ahead. You think of a man as governor of your state. The thought as to whether he would be interested in going further up on a national basis I don't believe entered my thinking at that time.

Jones: In summation, what in your opinion was the heritage Mr. Warren left the people of California when he departed to become Chief Justice in 1953?

Simonds: Well, I think he left California having created a sense of responsibility in government, a confidence in government, a lack of any scandal within his regime, and a thought for the benefit of all the people, progressively speaking -- not of the type we speak of today as a "progressive" or a "liberal." We're thinking in a great deal of assistance and governmental support. But the atmosphere he created in Sacramento was an atmosphere of loyalty, dependability, trustworthiness. In keeping with the times, I think he was substantially sound and pretty well on top of things as they occurred, so that benefits would accrue to the state and to the people.

The man had stature, and he created a feeling



Simonds: of trustworthiness. For instance, there's a picture in front of city hall there, and you can see the look on the people. That's my mother, incidentally, and my wife there and my daughter. [Shows photo]

Jones: This would be in '50, I suppose.

Simonds: Yes. Every person that had any contact with the man came away enthused with his philosophy and a feeling of ability to carry out the things that he had promised in his platform.

Jones: Can you think of any more that you'd like to add?

Simonds: Well, no. I can't add anything that would be of value, excepting that I would say that this was one of the pleasant campaigns that I have been associated with. I was certainly very happy to see that he was elected. I think that he has been one of our outstanding Californians in the national picture. The things that he had done will live for many, many years to come to the benefit of the people.

Jones: We thank you very much, Mr. Simonds.



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Earl Warren Oral History Project

Ernest H. Vernon

A MACHINIST'S RECOLLECTION

An Interview Conducted by  
Frank N. Jones





Ernest H. Vernon

March 1965



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Ernest H. Vernon: A MACHINIST'S RECOLLECTION

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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ernest Henry Vernon (born 1894) was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to document his role in the development of organized labor on the West Coast, and the relationships between union leaders and Earl Warren and other elected officials.

Interviewer: Frank N. Jones, who has extensive knowledge of labor history from his years with the state AFL-CIO plus general acquaintance with public affairs from his wide journalistic experience. Research material developed by the Regional Oral History Office with guidance on general questions from principal investigators of the Earl Warren Project.

### Conduct of the

Interview: Two interviews were conducted, on June 24 and July 24, 1969, at Mr. Vernon's home, 1314 Dayton Avenue, Alameda, California. Further interviews were contemplated but did not take place due to Mr. Vernon's protracted recovery from eye surgery.

Editing: Editing of the transcribed taped interviews was done by June Hogan of the Regional Oral History Office. Minor rearrangements of material were made to maintain continuity of the discussion without interrupting its informal quality. Mrs. Vernon read the edited text to her husband who made few technical corrections.

### Additional

Material: Discussions are being conducted with a view to the deposit of Mr. Vernon's extensive personal union records, from 1911 to 1966, in The Bancroft Library.

### Narrative Account of Mr. Vernon and Progress of the

Interview: As a tool-and-die maker, Hawaiian-born, Stanford and Punahou trained Ernest Vernon speaks for one of the most highly-skilled, longest-organized crafts. Apprenticed in 1911 in Chicago, later flying a World War I "wood and wire crate," he came to Oakland in 1923 where he joined Automotive Machinists' Lodge 1546, first meeting Earl Warren in 1925.



Vernon describes for us his years as organizer and eventually general business representative of the lodge (1935-66), during which he saw membership grow from 75 to 7,000. He was also active in founding the California Council of Machinists, AFL-CIO, and served as delegate to the Alameda County Central Labor Council and the Machinists International. In this capacity, Vernon met with district attorney Warren regarding the 1934 General Strike, and discusses labor's favorable reaction to the D.A.'s handling of events.

He also recounts for us his earlier management career as mechanical superintendent for the forerunners of Pacific Greyhound Lines and for the predecessor companies later incorporated into Safeway Stores.

He began working with apprenticeship programs in 1920 and was appointed by Governor Olson to the commission advising the state Division of Apprenticeship Standards, a public service he continued for 22 years, into Governor Brown's administration. Vernon credits Governor Warren with establishing the state's annual Apprenticeship Day. Even though a lifelong Democrat, Vernon rates Warren as California's most effective governor, listing him with Hiram Johnson and Goodwin Knight as "real effective liberals" responsible for "real progressive labor legislation." Speaking of stumping the state as campaign chairman for labor, he comments on Warren's frankness and personal warmth and declares, "I certainly did" see evidence of coming greatness. He should have been president."

Gabrielle Morris  
Regional Oral History Office



GREAT CITIZEN

Jones: Mr. Vernon, may I ask, to begin, why you are cooperating in this Earl Warren project? Why do you think it is important?

Vernon: Earl Warren was, and is a great citizen of this country, in my opinion. I first met Earl in the early Thirties, when I was maintenance superintendent for the MacMarr Stores, Inc. That was a very brief meeting. It was in the area of the 1934 general strike. In my opinion, Earl Warren has been one of the greatest citizens this country has ever had. He was a very, very able district attorney, a very, very able attorney general, and very able administrator and governor of the state of California. In my book, he was one of the very best governors this state has ever had.

Jones: You sound as though you want to have him running for governor or something again, by your enthusiasm. First of all, I'd like to know about your own career. Where were you born, Mr. Vernon?

Vernon: I was born in the Hawaiian Islands, on the island of Maui, in 1894.

Jones: What was your father's name and his occupation?

Vernon: My father was primarily a mining engineer originally. His name was Francis.

Jones: Did he come from the United States?

Vernon: He was born in Alexandria, Virginia.

Jones: And what was your mother's maiden name?

Vernon: My mother's maiden name was Noonan. She was born in Bangor, Maine. Her first name was Sara.

Jones: Where did they meet and in what year did they get married?

Vernon: That was before my time. They met here in the United States. Their meeting was in Washington, D.C. I would have to go into the archives for the date of their marriage.



Jones: How did they get to the Hawaiian Islands?

Vernon: My mother's relatives, many of them, were missionaries, and they were early arrivals in the Hawaiian Islands. In fact, I have numerous relatives there now who date back to the very early days of Hawaii.

Jones: You must be Methodist.

Vernon: No, I was an Episcopalian by confirmation, but that is not here nor there. I'm a Christian.

Jones: Where did you go to school?

Vernon: Well, I started my early school days in Honolulu and they were brief. My mother died when I was five. My main schooling took place in the state of California. I was semi-educated in San Francisco and I had some dislocation which took me to Sebastopol, Sonoma County, and Santa Rosa. However, I did graduate from Lowell High in San Francisco and attended Stanford.

Jones: How long did you go to Stanford?

Vernon: I was interrupted there, too, by a slight war, World War I. But I'm a graduate of Punahou University in Hawaii. I majored in engineering, machinist engineering, and law.

Jones: What was your first job that led to your entire career?

Vernon: First of all, I majored in engineering, and I thought that a first class mechanical engineer should have the ability and the know-how, the practical knowledge of that which he was going to make a living at. I decided that to assist my theory I should practice the manipulative end of the skills, so I became an apprentice in the machinists' trade. This was in Chicago, Illinois. My first venture into an apprenticeship lodge was in late 1911. The trade was the machinist trade and the division of the trade was tool and die making.

Jones: Your first job, then, related to your entry into the trade as tool and die maker was in Chicago, right?

Vernon: For the American Locomotive. They not only made locomotive engines, they made one of the first automobile cabs that was ever made, the Alco -- American Locomotive. It spelled their name out. There were only about nine automobile manufacturers





Vernon: established in 1911. Afterwards, there became several. In fact, I was an automobile manufacturer at one time. There became somewhere in the neighborhood of 750.

Jones: Now we have you launched as a working man. What did you do in your first job? Can you just go through your career.

### FIRST JOB

Vernon: Well, my first job as an apprentice, naturally I had to aid and assist journeymen machinists. My first job was running a drill press and then a milling machine, a hobbing machine, and a gear cutting machine, and shapers and lathes. Then, every so often, I was rotated from one position to another.

Jones: And this was when you were making Alco cars?

Vernon: No, it was general machine work, which included locomotive machinery, manufacturing of ice-making machinery, macaroni-making machinery, mining machinery and automotive equipment.

Jones: That must have been pretty simple after making a locomotive. How long did you work at that and when did you come to the Bay Area?

Vernon: I served my apprenticeship which consisted of four years. After four years, I became a journeyman, and then I had to travel. In those days, when you completed your term as an apprentice, you were turned loose from the shop. You went out and gathered outside dust and outside knowledge. Then, you were always able to come back one year after that to your former position.

Jones: What was the purpose of this?

Vernon: Just to broaden your scope. You don't learn everything in one particular place. You don't learn anything standing still. You have to move around.

Jones: All right. This would be around 1915. Did you come to the Bay Area then?

Vernon: I came to the Bay Area in 1914 and took a position with the then Pacific Gear and Tool Works. They were situated, if my memory serves me right, on Folsom between Third and Fourth in San Francisco. I worked



Vernon: there until the beginning of the First World War, and I knew that there was going to be a dislocation because I felt that way about it. So, I left there and went into the service, but at that time I transferred from my local in Chicago, Illinois to Local 68 in San Francisco. The officer of that local lodge, then, was Ed Misner, who was the head business representative. He later became Maritime Commissioner in California under Wilson, following our entry into the First World War.

Jones: Now we have to get you into the service. What was your rank in the service?

Vernon: I was a regular G.I. I was with the 85th Squadron and I was a pilot. I was part of the Signal Corps. In those days they had no Air Corps.

Jones: Did you get over to France?

Vernon: I certainly did. I got a few knocks.

Jones: Then after the war, did you come back?

Vernon: Oh, yes. As soon as the war ended and I was released, in fact, I came back to the city of San Francisco and resumed my active participation. I didn't go back to work for the Pacific Gear and Tool Works. I went to work as a shop superintendent for the California Transit, which later became the Pacific Greyhound. I manufactured buses of all types for different outfits under the California Transit auspices.

Jones: I was trying to think of . . . Pickwick?

Vernon: That was Charley Rand's outfit. Oh, yes, I know Pickwick well. We manufactured buses for Pickwick and all of them. And then Greyhound took everything over. It took Pickwick over in 1928-29 or somewhere.

Jones: If you were a superintendent and had a college education, why were you so pro-union?

Vernon: Well, I was pro-union, in a sense, all my life. Being particularly interested in human beings, I thought they would get a better shake and their abilities would be better expressed in a collective manner than in a single manner. So, all of my life and effort was to really round out a better productive term for the skilled man as well as for the employer who is employing him.



- Jones: What I am trying to do is to get you started in what you were in most of the time, this automotive lodge in Oakland. This lodge was started in 1920 in Oakland. Were you a member then?
- Vernon: No, at that time I was a member of a local Lodge No. 68 and No. 1305, in San Francisco.
- Jones: Did you help form these lodges?
- Vernon: Well, not directly but indirectly, yes.
- Jones: Apparently your machinists were organized for a long time and stronger than most of the trades, weren't they?
- Vernon: Lodge 68 is older than the international union itself. And Lodge 284. There were two established lodges in this area, one on the west side of the Bay which is San Francisco, and the other one on the east side which is Oakland. Those two lodges, their particular charters extend beyond the international charter.
- Jones: The Automotive Machinists are affiliated with the AFL-CIO, are they?
- Vernon: The Automotive Machinist is an affiliate of the International Association of Machinists, which in turn is an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. The national headquarters are in Washington, D.C., 1300 Connecticut Avenue.
- Jones: What was it that the men wanted -- security or pensions, independence of the individual?
- Vernon: In the early days, what we wanted was: security against blacklisting, discrimination, and abuses by management with reference to the manner of work turned out. The reason for our desire to band into a union was so that we could actually have more security than if we attempted to remain rugged individuals.
- Jones: Then, also, long-term contracts?

#### NO CONTRACTS

- Vernon: Well, in those days, we had no contracts. We were lucky to be able to even say that we were members of a union because the moment they knew that, they would have kicked you out on your ear -- if you had an ear.



Vernon: Union brought about a greater sense of security, which brought about a greater degree of understanding as a result of the amalgamation of skills into the one unit. With management, we had a far better understanding. We had better communication, and, as a result, we finally reached conditions in terms of agreement.

Jones: If you and your brother unionists could do it all over again, what would you strive for? I mean, are you satisfied today, more or less, with what labor unions have brought about in the United States? What is lacking today? Where did labor miss, if labor did miss?

Vernon: Well, labor, like all organized societies, missed a great many things because, even though you organize for a common purpose, sometimes that common purpose cannot be achieved within the space of time of your life. It has to be achieved by others who may take up the history where you left off. When I started in business, I was not able to become a full fledged journeyman until I reached the maturity of around twenty-six years of age because I had to, first, go to school. I had to get my theory in math at school levels, and then what I acquired after school, while I was an apprentice going to night school and college. All of this tends to take up your time and growth on this earth, and so your matured life represents between the ages of twenty-six and maybe the span of your full value to an employer, so they say, is at the age of forty-five. You haven't got much time. When we retire at that point, the young coming apprentices that take over, that you train, have to carry on and build. This is the way our nation has been built.

Jones: Are you satisfied with what labor has accomplished?

Vernon: I think labor's accomplishments have been pretty tremendous to date, and I certainly think that the accomplishments of labor would never have been achieved as fast as they have been achieved, if it weren't for the fact that we could rely on good representation elsewhere, in the Senate, in the Congress, in the courts of the land, and that's where Earl Warren, in my book, gets into this very picture of being a real, true American and a real leader of this nation. He should have been the President of the United States. He would have made a great contribution.





Jones: When did you come to Oakland?

Vernon: I moved to Oakland in 1923. I was with the California Transit then and they were situated at Tenth and Madison Streets, I believe it was.

Jones: And they were the forerunner of the Key System?

Vernon: They were the forerunner of the Pacific Greyhound.

Jones: Then you transferred to Lodge 1546?

Vernon: At that time in 1923, I transferred in from 1305, which was the San Francisco Automotive Machinist Local, to 1546 in Oakland. And I have been a member of that lodge ever since.

Jones: What did you do during the twenties and the thirties?

Vernon: I was in an executive position directing activities of machinists practically all of my life, following my graduation from apprentice to journeyman.

Jones: Then you did union work, organized labor work, instead of working for a corporation?

Vernon: I worked for corporations, some of the largest in the country, as a superintendent, general foreman, and what have you, directing activities of others. I was with the Swane-halt Steamship Company here in Oakland as a maintenance superintendent, when I was drafted by the union to become their representative.

Up to this point, while I'd carried a card and had been a member of a union, I couldn't very well take any real active part in their ability to express conditions, other than under the good of the order because I was in an executive position, and I would not be privileged to undertake that activity.

However, in the early part of 1935, while I was an employee for the Swane-halt Steamship Company and their Division of Warehouse and Trucking, which was Kellogg's, I was asked if I would assist the union in organizing the mechanics in Oakland, California. I told them that I would be most happy to help in organizing the city of Oakland's auto mechanics.



## ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

Vernon: Prior to this, the membership of Lodge 1546 was actually seventy-five members. They were all employed then, those that were members, by well-known trucking establishments, maybe a couple of bakeries, and what-have-you. Beyond that point, the auto mechanics, as known today, working for the motor car dealers and other repair shops, were not organized. So I launched an organizing campaign and organized the motor car dealers' employees in Oakland and Alameda County. That organization was completed in 1936, wherein the motor car dealers of the East Bay banded then themselves as dealers in an association known as the East Bay Motor Car Dealers Association. That association entered into collective bargaining agreements with Lodge 1546, for and on behalf of the local union's members and their employees. And their relationship continued on said basis from that time to the current day.

Jones: How many members do they have today?

Vernon: Lodge 1546 today has seven thousand and some odd members. It is the second largest automotive machinist lodge in the world. Our wages are the best.

Jones: You told me that you knew Mr. Warren. Where did you meet Mr. Warren and under what circumstances and what year?

Vernon: My first acquaintance with Earl Warren was when he was still deputy district attorney under Ezra DeCoto. That was in 1923 when I first came over here. There was no real issue. I was then with the Safeway Stores, though it was known then as Mutual Stores. I was general superintendent for them of all the mechanical equipment. The stores were the predecessors of the MacMarr, and MacMarr was the predecessor of Safeway. We purchased the Piggily Wiggily, Rose Baking Company and the Saunders Stores- Sole Owner of My Name, the Martha Washington Stores, Top Hat, Red Hat, what-have-you, we took them all in.

Jones: You were representing management then, when you met Mr. Warren? What was the occasion?

Vernon: The occasion was a get-together. It was one of these activities that was brought about by the new building of the Mutual Stores at Eleventh and Fifth Avenue in Oakland. They had built a big establishment. Up to



- Vernon: then they had been situated out where the Fruitvale Theater is now. They put up this new building which encompassed the entire square block. Mutual Stores. That was Emeil Hagstrom's. He is dead now.
- Jones: What was Earl Warren's role in this?
- Vernon: It was just one of these gatherings where there was a community project. That was my first meeting with Mr. Warren. He was quite young, very clear-eyed, blue-eyed, sharp. I was very impressed with him. We talked about generalities, law enforcement, what-have-you. I became very enthused with his philosophy in our conversation about one thing or another.
- Jones: Did you know then that he was going to run for district attorney?
- Vernon: Oh, no. We talked just as individuals.
- Jones: What did he say that impressed you?

#### A LEADER

- Vernon: Just his general philosophy and general discussion. We talked about anything and everything. His appearance, his carriage, his delivery . . . he was a leader. He impressed me as a real outstanding leader, far more than his superior, the district attorney, although he was a very good man.
- Jones: Did you talk about organized labor?
- Vernon: We talked about organized labor and in fact, the next time I met Earl, later on, was in the General Strike.
- Jones: When you first met him, it was around 1925. And the General Strike was when?
- Vernon: That was 1934, when I really had an opportunity of discussing matters of labor.
- Jones: Where did you meet Mr. Warren and under what circumstances in 1934?
- Vernon: That was a committee from the Central Labor Council of Alameda County headed by William Spooner, who is now dead.



Jones: What was your role? Were you in the Central Labor Council through the Automotive Machinists?

Vernon: I was a delegate. In fact, I was a member of the Central Labor Council Executive Board. We met with the district attorney, Earl Warren.

Jones: How did the district attorney's office have anything to do with the labor dispute?

Vernon: The labor dispute arose as a result of the General Strike over the situation of trucks. We met in his office and we were invited to confer with him. We discussed the whole subject matter. We discussed the matter of cooperation between the labor movement and his office and vice versa for the betterment of the whole program.

Jones: What did you want and what did he want?

Vernon: All he wanted was to enlist the cooperation of labor so that the citizenry and the property of the public would be protected. So we arrived at an understanding of how the conditions would be executed and how the pickets would conduct themselves and how the police department would conduct itself.

Jones: Were there any frictions?

Vernon: No, no friction whatsoever. There was no friction that was in existence other than arriving at a particular program so that the strike would be carried on to its ultimate conclusion and the benefits that labor was seeking to derive from that strike were resolved.

Jones: Did something good come of this?

Vernon: Within a few days later, everything was settled. That was the time that Earl Warren really became an outstanding leader in the eyes of the labor movement and Alameda County.

Jones: How did he show that? Did they pass any resolutions?

Vernon: The evidence of that was in the quick response that Warren got from labor when he ran for the office of district attorney and for any offices above that, including governor of the state of California.





Jones: The CIO was separate then?

Vernon: The CIO was a completely separate arm. They did not endorse him and some of the labor movement did not endorse him. ILWU did not endorse him. There were some other labor organizations in the A.F. of L. that did not endorse him. But the majority of the movement as a whole backed Warren up. I chaired his campaign.

Jones: You were labor chairman for Warren. Was that in 1938?

Vernon: No, that was 1942 and 1946.

Jones: Getting into that industrial relations apprenticeship standards thing -- you had an interim appointment from Olson, and you worked for Warren?

#### DEMOCRAT FOR WARREN

Vernon: I am a Democrat and I've been a Democrat. I was a Democrat for Warren.

Jones: Then Warren's colleagues didn't hold it against you for having been friendly with Olson.

Vernon: Oh, no. Quite to the contrary. He is a very open minded man, but I wasn't necessarily friendly with Olson, don't misunderstand.

Jones: No, but he couldn't have disliked you very much if you got the appointment.

Vernon: Well, that is true. In working for Warren, I was working for him as Warren, not as a Republican. In fact I had not done any work for Olson, period. Olson merely appointed me on the interim basis for this particular apprenticeship program under the Shelley-Maloney Act, because of my background and particularly because of my knowledge of apprenticeship, and my background with the federal government in that particular connection.

Jones: That would be John F. Shelley, San Francisco's present lobbyist and then Tom Maloney . . .

Vernon: Tom Maloney was the real sponsor of the Shelley-Maloney Act and he was the real wheel behind the act. Jack Shelley is a very personal friend of mine, and



Vernon: actually he was the Senator that signed this bill. Tom Maloney was the Assemblyman from Butchertown, South of Market, and Shelley was the State Senator.

Jones: What was there about Mr. Warren as an individual that appealed to you? You were a Democrat. Why didn't you work for Mr. Olson?

Vernon: Mr. Warren had so much over Mr. Olson that it would be against my own ethics to work for somebody that I didn't think would represent my best interest. The subject of the party does not concern me to any degree. The thing that concerns me is the person that is going to be elected for a position, not so much the overcoat that he may be wearing at the time, but his ability to represent me and others in the community that I believe think the same as I or want the same particular conditions that I am looking for.

Jones: You know, of course, about the King-Conner-Ramsay case, the Point Lobos ship murder in 1936. It's one of the most well-documented things on record. In 1936, did your local take a stand in the Point Lobos case? Many unions, like ILWU, termed the case a labor frame-up.

Vernon: My local took no particular part in this situation that took place in the Estuary.

Jones: Did they contribute funds to the defense of these people?

Vernon: No, we contributed no funds to the defense of this particular set-up. So, therefore, we never took too much particular note of the subject matter other than that which was expressed at council level by delegates.

And I call your attention to this point. During that particular period, there was a separation of labor as it is now constituted. We had an element of labor that was not part of the American Federation of Labor. This was the CIO and the ILWU, and some farm organizations and some white ticket organizations, which were temporarily expelled from their international unions at the time. They were iron workers and structural iron workers, and what have you. And I don't know what the particular reasons were.

So, there was some split in the meetings of minds



Vernon: as far as the people were concerned. My union was not a part of that particular discussion.

Jones: Can you recall any specific incident where Earl Warren aided the cause of organized labor through legislation or personal appearances, aside from campaign promises?

Vernon: Now I will tell you this. I think that Earl Warren's greatest contribution to labor was in his administrative application while in office: justice. In his office as district attorney, as far as I am concerned and my union is concerned, the records will disclose that he was the fairest -- not saying that the present district attorney, who was also a deputy with Earl, isn't a fair-minded man; Frank Coakley is a personal friend of mine. Earl's administration as district attorney, the fairness and justice measured out under his administration, was one of the greatest boons to labor in this county at the time. Of course, there are people who will differ with me in the labor movement, who at that time differed with me, because they were on a different path, as far as I am concerned. But, in the over-all picture, Earl Warren's administration as district attorney and as attorney general and as governor of this state actually helped labor to a great degree.

Jones: Well, how did he help?

Vernon: Legislatively. He signed a great many bills that were very favorable to the working people.

Jones: I know it was a long time ago, and it is hard to remember, but can you remember any specific bills?

Vernon: Now I would have to go through my archives. If I'd have known, I would have had my archives out, but, you see, I'm scheduled to be in Washington this weekend and I never prepared for this.

Jones: I guess all great men make some mistakes in their career and Warren has often been criticized as making his biggest one on the internment of the Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor. Do you agree this was an error, in light of Mr. Warren's knowledge of constitutional rights? Did your local pass any resolutions backing Warren's stand or did you take any action on behalf of the Japanese?



## JAPANESE-AMERICANS

- Vernon: At that time, no, to my knowledge, we had none. The Japanese-American had never been exposed to our kind of work to any degree, outside of those that were born and raised in the Hawaiian Islands. Here on the Mainland, the Japanese at that time were not at all oriented to or mindful of the mechanical application as it applies to working people, and they were not interested in that. There are some few now, but then there were none.
- Jones: How did you feel about the internment of the Japanese?
- Vernon: Well, the internment of the Japanese at that time was pretty much accepted by we in the labor movement as well as others, predicated on the conditions that prevailed as a result of Pearl Harbor. So, naturally, we had no particular time to analyze whether what was done was good, bad, or indifferent. They were classed as possible enemies, and this was the end result. So to be brutally frank, we in the labor movement, didn't place too much concern on that subject.
- Jones: Did resolutions come up in the labor council for and against Japanese? I know Bridges' union took issue with it, gave money and that sort of thing for their defense.
- Vernon: Bridges' union was directly involved in some other issues that the ordinary service unions, such as the food clerks, garage employees, were not. They were not as close to Bridges' organization or the Sailors of the Pacific, Harry Lundberg's outfit were, so the position taken by Bridges' union was not the position accepted by the other labor unions in this regard.
- As to Mr. Warren's position, in reference to the Japanese being dislodged from their particular places of business and being shipped to Utah or wherever they were shipped to, Tule Lake or what have you, this was what we considered a precautionary move on the part of the administration, both nationally as well as state-wide, for the preservation of our particular interest.
- Jones: Then for either your machinists' lodge or the Central Labor Council it wasn't much of an issue.





- Vernon: To my knowledge there was no issue taken on that. Bridges' union, yes, there was. They were connected with the Maritime, but I don't know why.
- Jones: This was for refusing to load scrap iron.
- Vernon: Oh, yes. The question of the shipping of the scrap iron to Japan to throw it back at us, as it was stated in many resolutions, those type of resolutions prevailed at certain times, but there was not much discussion about the displacement of Japanese or about Earl Warren and his position in that connection. We just backed the administration on the basis that, by God, until such time as we could examine the thing more carefully, this was the proper thing to do. I happened to be in Portland, Oregon, on the very day that our Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. We were assembled in session at a convention at the Congress Hotel, the machinists, and I was its director and secretary general at the time. The meeting adjourned just like that, and everybody scooted for wherever the heck he could and got home as fast as he could.
- Jones: It was a great shock all right. So far, we have had you talking to Mr. Warren twice. Can you recall your next meeting after the talk in 1925 and then the General Strike, where the meeting was held in the district attorney's office? When was your next meeting?
- Vernon: Oh, I met with Earl Warren on numerous occasions following that. After that, I became very active . . .
- Jones: I mean prior to that. What was your title when you were labor chairman for Warren?
- Vernon: I was the general business representative for the Automotive Machinists and I was secretary-treasurer for the California Council of Machinists for all machinists in the state.
- Jones: When you acted as a labor chairman for Mr. Warren when he first ran for governor which would have been 1942, what was your title then?
- Vernon: Labor chairman for Earl Warren, Alameda County.
- Jones: Later you did the same thing in 1946, then?



- Vernon: Every time thereafter. In fact, I was prepared to endorse him for the President of the United States before they jumped the gun and appointed him Chief Justice.
- Jones: You favored him over Dewey then, from what I gather. He would have probably made the run in 1944, only FDR went again.
- Vernon: We were trying to talk him into running, when Dewey's name came up.
- Jones: When did you last talk with Mr. Warren?
- Vernon: My last talk with Earl was just before he was appointed -- I mean personal talk with him -- Chief Justice in 1953. He was out here and he addressed our apprenticeship graduation at the Oakland Civic Auditorium.
- Jones: Did you have much of a talk with him?
- Vernon: Oh, yes. I was chairman of that session, presiding over the meeting.
- Jones: How did he happen to show up at the apprenticeship graduation?
- Vernon: On our request invitation as chief speaker.
- Jones: Did he say anything to indicate his attitudes and philosophy?
- Vernon: He certainly did. He expressed it everytime he ever had the opportunity of addressing labor. He expressed his feelings like when he worked in Bakersfield as an apprentice in the railroad shop himself. And he later became a musician and a member of the musicians' union.
- Jones: His father was a machinist and got blackballed in Los Angeles and that is why they moved to Bakersfield.
- Vernon: That's right.
- Jones: Now, at any time in the early days that you knew him, did you have any thoughts or any inkling that he could turn out to be one of the nation's greatest liberal Chief Justices?



Vernon: I certainly did. I told you earlier in our discussion here that I first took particular notice of Mr. Warren's philosophy in the early days when he was a deputy district attorney under Ezra DeCoto.

Jones: Some of these decisions like the Brown school case, they are not only liberal, they are absolutely revolutionary in that they have changed the whole school structure. And then, these various Supreme Court cases on arrested persons' right to an attorney. Those are revolutionary. Now, what did he show in the early days? Did you have any inkling that he had the capacity?

#### THE REAL INCIDENT

Vernon: I certainly did. I could refer to several cases but I would have to do some research. But, I am specifically aware of one particular case in the Teamster's strike, cab driver's strike. This was in the 1930's. He was then district attorney. He had just become district attorney.

Charles Real was the secretary-treasurer of Local 70, the largest teamster organization on this side of the Bay at that time. He was a very powerful leader then. He was vice-president of the State Federation of Labor. In this incident I see the philosophy that I had earlier. The basic fact of this was that there was a real violent move by somebody during that strike and they tried to pin it on labor. The teamsters tried to organize it and Real was their leader.

Warren's judgment, which was, I thought, the sound judgment, actually saved the imprisonment of Real under a program that was conspired by management. I am a little hazy on the facts.

Of course, Real is dead now and there are very few left that remember these incidents.

Jones: In 1946 or 1947, when he broached a free medicare program, do you think it was sincere?

Vernon: Yes. The only reason why he didn't pull through was that he didn't have enough solid ground under him. He had to be in a position to get this going. To analyze Earl Warren's reasons is one thing, and why



Vernon: he didn't execute them at that time is another.

Jones: Well, at least one ILWU leader, Mr. Germaine Bulcke, who is now retired, claims that Mr. Warren just went through the motions on this medical program for California. He didn't push it in the legislature. He had a majority in both houses, as Mr. Bulcke remembered, but he just sort of gave it lip service to establish himself and give himself the image of a liberal to get Democratic votes.

Vernon: No, he didn't have the majority of votes in both houses on that piece of legislation. In fact, labor was not all behind him on that legislation. That's a fact. He did not have support of Labor Federation and many labor unions who at that time were sceptical of medical plans.

Jones: In your estimation, Mr. Vernon, what are the major reasons for the political success of Mr. Warren, who was never beaten as a D.A., and he won his attorney general race handily? Surely, it was more than the lucky fact of being in the right place at the right time and having a photogenic family?

#### DOWN-TO-EARTH FELLOW

Vernon: Well, I'll tell you what I think gave him my vote. He was a very warm fellow, when he spoke to you personally. Number one, he had an open face. There was a frankness about Earl Warren. When you spoke to him, you sensed it right here and now. He was a down-to-earth fellow. You could sit down with and reason out conditions with him, if you had the opportunity, as I had and others I know of. Earl Warren was that kind of a fellow. He inspired that confidence.

Now, he couldn't obtain everything he wanted or that his own desires dictated, because as a shrewd leader he recognized this: that he had to have the majority of people behind him to achieve these ends. That was the case in question in that approach to the first medical plan in California. I remember that well, because I wanted that kind of a deal. I thought it was good, but a lot of people disagreed with me.

Jones: Why would labor be against a pre-paid medical plan?





Vernon: Well, they thought there were gimmicks. There are always people against certain things whether they're in labor or not.

The first program that I put into play was welfare for the working man. Our people thought that they should have the money for it instead. They thought they could get a better plan by buying it. Collectively, you get more than what you can get singly.

So, I established the first plan, then Earl had these ideas in the back of his mind, had them at all times in the back of his mind. I know that he conveyed them to a great many of his very close confidants that he could speak to.

Jones: Yes, I can see some of these characteristics to make him a successful vote-getter, but I was thinking about organized labor's viewpoint. It's no secret why union members voted for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. They would have voted for him fifty terms because everytime they cashed a pay check and they think, "the Wagner Act is Social Security."

With Warren he hadn't accomplished those things, so his public support must have been more subtle. You know, you only need to go to any public library and look over old newspapers and there is some labor guy calling him the stooge of the Los Angeles Times and Tribune.

Vernon: Quite the contrary. He wasn't any more a stooge of the Los Angeles Times than I am. In fact, he was actually against them.

Jones: Well, I guess he never expressed himself too much outwardly, at least before he was governor.

Vernon: He needed some rungs to climb up to the top of the ladder.

Jones: How did he gain the confidence of the people? You are saying it was efficiency and personal ability, friendly image and powerful personality.

Vernon: Powerful personality and a person who could sit down and reason with you on any subject. I will never forget the first time I had a real long discussion with Earl Warren when he was governor. A fellow by the name



Vernon: of John Janusch, who is now dead, represented management. We wanted to have a declaration by the governor's office of apprenticeship week in California.

Jones: What management did Mr. Janusch represent?

Vernon: He represented management in general. He was a secretary of the Automobile Association and several other associations, parts associations and sundry industries.

I called the governor's office -- he was out at the time, but I made an appointment with his secretary for a meeting with him. All we wanted was just about five minutes to discuss this matter with him. We thought this was all the time we needed. But, I was called back a day or so later by his secretary, who told me that the appointment was on and we would have this meeting.

He was so interested in our program that instead of the five minutes we had asked for, he wanted to discuss it further and also the other benefits that should be actually programmed for industry and the apprenticeship program.

We wanted a declaration by the governor's office for an apprenticeship week in the state of California so that it could be announced all over the state. He made the announcement and from that time on there was an apprenticeship week while he was governor in the state of California on the first day of June of every year. It is continued now.

Jones: Were you happy because he did what you wanted?

Vernon: No, we were happy for the simple reason that this was a step in the proper direction. We had a tough time selling apprenticeship to employers. You know, an employer naturally wants people already tailor-made and fully efficient as soon as they get out of the cradle. Employers had to be educated to this end and he was the greatest media in achieving this education of management than any other governor we ever had, including Olson. He not only left this for posterity, but actually left a lot of others, a long line. Next time we get together I'll quote them to you.

Now I will tell you very frankly that I think



Vernon: Earl Warren was one of the greatest administrative minds we ever had in the state of California. I only can say this, in my term as a citizen in the state of California up to the current date, I recall three outstanding governors who were not Democrats, but who were outstanding governors in the state of California. Among them, Hiram Johnson, who gave life to the workmen's compensation law in California. Earl Warren, who was the most effective of the two. The next was Knight. Now there are three Republicans there that I don't particularly see anything but real progressive, liberal administration on their parts, insofar as the citizenry of California is concerned. I again repeat that there sometimes comes a fellow that, irrespective of what overcoat he has, is the right guy whether a Republican or a Democrat.

Brown was a Republican all his life until he chose to run for the district attorney for the city and county of San Francisco. When he learned that he couldn't win it as a Republican, he turned Democrat. I didn't forget that he was a Republican. I didn't vote for him in the first instance. Incidentally, he appointed me just the same. I was for Knight. He was a hard worker. He was a good governor.

If I have rambled in this interview, I am at the ripe age of 76, now. The labor movement and I have been consistent companions from the time I was able to first witness my first sugar cane cutter as a kid working for my father in Maui.

Jones: In conclusion, we are grateful for your cooperation and the taking of your time to go back into your long career as an Alameda County labor official which so closely parallels the so-called Warren years in California.



FAIREST OF THE FAIR

Jones: Mr. Vernon, as you will recall during our session last month, you kindly agreed to cut another tape to get on record your impressions of Mr. Warren, based on your first-hand knowledge, knowing him personally during the years between 1925-1953 when he left California for Washington, D.C.

Your firm belief in the then and now greatness of this Supreme Court justice is well substantiated from memory. You said that, if you had a chance to go over your papers and personal files, you could probably recall more specific detailed activities, possibly like legislation or union resolutions.

May we get under way now by my asking if you have found the time to get into your personal archives?

Vernon: At the time of our last discussion, I felt that I was able to go through my archives and really get into more specific dates, times and places. Unfortunately, I am afflicted with a condition that causes my eyes to not review these matters as they did formerly. The doctor advised me to be as quiet as possible since my last interview. The end result is that I have not gone into the archives other than to briefly make a research of some of my daily reminders that existed during that particular period of time.

Jones: All right. We won't go into as much detail then.

Would you agree that as a general theme for this discussion, we might consider why Mr. Warren was, as you put it, the "fairest of the fair," not only in his dealings with organized labor but with the general public and employer groups as well. Why was he so "fair?"

Vernon: It is pretty difficult to answer why a person is so "fair." My summation of his fairness is completely based on the many interviews that I have had with the man in person over subject matters pertaining to the populace as a whole in the state of California, particularly in reference to apprenticeship matters, legislative matters concerning the effects they would have on the training of youth in the state of California. All of these subjects that embrace these particular functions.





Vernon: That gave me a close insight as to the appreciation that Earl Warren had for the people as a whole in the state of California.

Jones: You talked to him first in 1925 and the last time was about 1952?

Vernon: Yes. I co-chaired his campaign, with Harry Lundberg, who then was the representative of Sailors Union of the Pacific.

Jones: Was this the first campaign?

Vernon: We both chaired both campaigns. This, I think, was the last campaign in which he participated for the governor of California.

Jones: Based on our first interview, I know that you believe that Mr. Warren is not only fair but the most effective of three outstanding progressives: of Republican California governors. That is a pretty high mark you gave him because you are a life-long Democrat. You mentioned the others as Hiram Johnson and Goodwin Knight.

In what particular instance can you recall him to be fair? You served a total of twenty-two years under Olson, Warren, Knight, and Brown, so you might have something specific in your memory towards this point.

Vernon: I consider Warren one of the fairest if not the fairest, governors that we have had in California. That is naturally based upon my tenure of citizenship in California which as been practically all my life.

Warren was not only outstanding as far as an administrator, but he was outstanding as a complete coordinator in the differences that prevailed between different segments of our society in California.

In his first term as governor, he began to show his abilities as a person who actually had compassion and the interest of the populace as a whole at heart -- to do what was best for the state and the people.

Jones: Can you think of any specific legislation that he backed?

Vernon: I know of no legislation that was advanced by the American Federation of Labor through its state body,



Vernon: the California State Federation of Labor, under the administration of Edward Vendelour, the predecessor of Neil Haggerty, in the 1930's. . . .

One of Warren's first appointees to the industrial commission was Paul Scharrenberg. He was director of the State Department of Industrial Relations.

Jones: I interviewed him one time after his retiring. He said he was working on his biography and history of labor in California. I've never seen it. Paul is dead now, though. It certainly would have been important.

Why was he a good appointment?

Vernon: Scharrenberg was a man who actually was associated with labor most of his adult life. He was out of San Francisco from the Sailor's Union of the Pacific. Paul was a very able economist and a great student of humanity.

There was one of the first real appointments made by a governor, who actually best served the people of California in that position, Department of Industrial Relations.

Jones: Do you remember any of the things that he accomplished?

Vernon: Really, there were too many of them. If I had the opportunity to go through my archives, I could keep you pondering over the many deeds that were performed under the Warren administration that have been most beneficial to all of the populace.

If the operation on my eyes is a success, I will be more than willing to go through my archives. I have plenty of them, reams and reams of them. As the secretary-treasurer of the California Conference of Machinists, which is the largest body in the state of California representing machinists, I have accumulated all types of materials that actually have passed through the annals of government while Warren was titular head of California.

I will be most happy to leave my archives to the Bancroft Library. They are beneficial to all parties concerned.

Jones: I see you have some notes there. Would you like to discuss them now?



Vernon: No. Other than the fact that they serve to remind me of some of the instances in which I have had the opportunity of observing Governor Warren in action.

### CAMPAIGN TOUR

Vernon: I had an occasion in his second campaign for governor of traveling with him and his aides through the county of Alameda. He chartered a bus. In this bus, there were twenty to twenty-four aides and co-chairmen and people who were interested in backing him in his campaign.

Our trip was from town to town. Our first stop was San Leandro and then went on through the balance of the county from the northern section near Contra Costa down to the extreme southeastern section of the county, including the last town, Livermore.

That accorded me an experience of making an evaluation of the man, who was running for the office of governor, in making answers to the inquiries made by the citizens throughout the counties.

Jones: Were there any hecklers?

Vernon: None whatsoever. There were a lot of questions.

In all of that trip, which took all day from early morning to late afternoon, I got a glimpse into the true man, Earl Warren.

Jones: What impressed you?

Vernon: The sincere answer to the questions posed to him, the constructive manner in which he advised the people that he would pursue in curing these ailments that prevailed at that time.

Jones: What were some of the issues?

Vernon: They were so numerous -- from tide lands to roads and railroads. The inquiries were from A to Z. The question of law enforcement, additional highways, welfare, forestry, unemployment, the ability to improve industrial facilities in the state to attract more industry. They were answered forthrightly and squarely, without equivocation.



Jones: These probably all accumulated during the war years. Warren certainly must have done all right with California growing into the largest state.

Vernon: I think that Warren was the pioneer that put California on the platform that she finds herself today, industrially and otherwise.

Jones: What did he do to attract additional industry? Washington and Oregon had a state agency, but Warren just used a private secretary.

#### GOVERNOR'S CABINET

Vernon: In his administrative qualifications, he was able to select as cabinet members people who were completely versatile in these points. People who were true pioneers and who wanted to aid him in building this state to the end that it was when he left it as governor.

Jones: Did he have many Democrats?

Vernon: He had as many Democrats as he had Republicans. He had nothing but the most accomplished personnel that he could obtain, without regard to creed, color or party line.

Jones: Can you recall the names of them?

Vernon: That was a long way back, but the records hold their names. He just surrounded himself with real practical people in administering the governorship of California.

Jones: I am asking you these questions with the intent of learning how you arrived at your very high opinion of Mr. Warren's administration of his office, leading to his great career in the Supreme Court. There is little doubt today that he is internationally regarded as one of the great American jurists of all times. It started right here in Alameda County. We would like to know the whys and wherefors of his career.

Vernon: His shining qualifications were exemplified by his mannerisms, his approach, his forthrightness in answers. He was warm. The color of his eyes was sufficient to instill confidence in any individual who posed a query to him.





- Vernon: He was the kind of individual that if he went into a machine shop, he wanted to go right back out there where the craftsmen were working and to make inquiries of them and their work. In a short time of talking to a person, he was the sort of individual that got his real confidence.
- Jones: This was how he got so many votes.
- Vernon: This is why he became such a popular governor. This is what makes a man popular, how he actually handles people -- their questions and their problems.
- Jones: Can you recall any other facets of his career, like the time you went on the campaign tour with him in 1946?
- Vernon: Since that time, I went on other tours with him. I went up and down the state campaigning for him as chairman of his labor committee, northern as well as southern California. This was during the second and third term.
- Jones: Was that through the Central Labor Council of Alameda County?
- Vernon: I was the general business representative for the Automotive Machinists Lodge here in Oakland. I was the secretary-treasurer for all machinists in California, which is known as the California Council of Machinists. I helped organize and found this council. It was under his administration that we organized that particular branch of the machinists' movement.
- Jones: In what year did you found the state organization?
- Vernon: 1936.
- Jones: When Warren was a candidate, you went out and kind of talked the boys into voting for him?
- Vernon: I didn't have to do much talking in the case of Earl Warren, because of the fact that most of the working people had already discovered what type of candidate he would be for governor while he was still attorney general for the state.
- Jones: They were particularly happy with his law enforcement, against the gambling and such.



Vernon: He was, again, a forthright personality in his dealings and in upholding the law. This is one that made him so far outstanding above the others.

Jones: That Frederick Napoleon Howser, who was tied in with Artie Samish, was pretty well substantiated with slot machines. Nothing like that was ever attached to Earl Warren.

Vernon: To my knowledge there has never been a stigma attached to Earl Warren.

### SOCIAL LEGISLATION

Jones: What about Warren's attitude towards social legislation? Remember the McClain pension movement? McClain probably went too far out with his pensions, but what he did do was raise the standards of pensions payments by his continual lobbying. Could Warren have been a little more formidable in social legislation, and then this McClain pension thing wouldn't have started and got so strong?

Vernon: I don't know of any other governor that could have been more formidable than he was in that regard. The question of pensions during that period when they started writing was a subject that was not too fully understood by many people. I don't think there is any governor that could have done what McClain wanted done without having harnessed the population to the end that the governor would have been up on the throne.

Jones: What I remember from headlines that the pension people were getting about \$80 and McClain asked for \$150. It wasn't fiscally feasible, but what resulted was a compromise and McClain got a lot of kudos for raising the pension.

Vernon: Earl Warren was just as interested in elevating the pension rates over and above what they were receiving at the time as anyone. However, there were other financial matters to look into predicated on what McClain was asking for.

You have to remember that our state was hampered by the war that had just preceded his getting into this office. He was one of the first governors that came out, in a progressive manner, looking into the social advancements that should be made. He had a



Vernon: very open mind in that regard because he was a fellow that had come up from the working lines. He wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Warren was a champion in making this state one that would be more liveable for its people. He had the greatest pride in California. He was a champion of the small people.

Jones: Looking at the Warren years 1925 to 1953 when you were associated with him, can you tell me what the heritage was that he left behind? What action did he take to build California into the largest state?

#### GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Vernon: Warren left the majority and the population of this state in a state of mind that spelled out progress all the way through. They had prosperity, good roads, good legislation, good law enforcement, everything that could have been accomplished within the span of time he served. He had laid the groundwork for his successor to carry on that particular type of activity and progress that prevailed during his administration. I guess he left the people of California the greatest accomplishments that any governor has ever left to any commonwealth in the United States.

The only unfortunate situation is that we didn't have the opportunity of elevating him to the highest post in the land, the Presidency of the United States. He would have been one to go down in history.

Jones: That would have been in 1944, if FDR had not taken another shot at it.

Vernon: He's a man's man. He was the people's man. The manner in which they turned out to vote for him surely supports my statements. He had some people that disagreed with him, we all have. I disagreed with him several times, and I called it to his attention.

Jones: I can't recall any enemies that Warren had. He certainly was a universally liked man.

Vernon: He never had any enemies in the caliber that we term enemies. He might have had people that differed with his manner of applying himself. There were very few of them. I'm talking of left-wingers. We had some then that bobbed their head up now and then --



Vernon: the Slabys and others. He was an individual by the name of Frank Slaby and he lived here in Oakland. He's dead, I believe, now.

In those days we had two different branches of labor. One that was an offshoot of the American Federation of Labor created by the committee for organizing mass industry, the CIO. He was a member of the Auto Workers, which was affiliated with the CIO later. His main activity was at the Chevrolet Plant in Oakland when it was on 73rd Avenue. He felt that there was too much law and order insofar as the issues were concerned. In other words, this question of going into a plant and sitting down. When he tried to get some go-ahead on permission to do this, he was told by the law enforcement agency that this was not permissible, that they could picket. Warren was in the attorney general's office at the time. He still carried Alameda County and the entire membership of the local, with the exception of Frank Slaby. I addressed his local union, so I know very well that Warren carried.

Jones: Warren must have been the most popular of all governors. Governor Reagan certainly has detractors; Goody Knight was disliked by even the Republicans because he was so pro-labor. Olson was considered too liberal and the church people didn't like him.

Vernon: Olson was a liberal thinker, but he didn't have the force to put his ideas over. He was too old. By the time he actually reached the point of exercising those liberal viewpoints, he was just going over the ridge to the other side of the mountain. He became senile.

He was a fine person, but he never impressed me as a person who had the capacity to run a state such as California.





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